

**LABOUR MARKET CORE SKILLS REQUIREMENTS AND
UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SOFT SKILLS COMPETENCE IN
NORTH-WEST, NIGERIA**

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BY

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL
MANAGEMENT, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN,
ILORIN, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.) IN EDUCATIONAL
MANAGEMENT**

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this study was carried out by **ADEDEJI, Israel Olusegun (96/045866)** and has been read and approved as having met part of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D.) in Educational Management, in the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to the Almighty God for the successful completion of this programme. To Him alone be all the glory.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My gratitude goes to the Almighty God, the Giver of life, the Unchangeable Changer in the changing situation of life, for making this research possible and did not allow it to end up as an abandoned project.

I am highly indebted to my supervisor, Prof. D. O. Durosaro, for his kind and sincere pieces of advice and for his eagerness to see me through this study successfully as soon as possible. I appreciate him for his easy accessibility, constructive criticisms and useful contributions all through this study. My unreserved appreciation goes to Professor Florence A. O. Olaseinde-Williams for easy accessibility, constructive contributions and thorough supervision of this study.

Also, I deeply acknowledge the Head of Department, Prof. Afusat T. Alabi for her words of encouragement and her advice. My sincere appreciation also goes to all my mentors in the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin: Prof. D. O. Durosaro, Prof. Nike Y. S. Ijaiya, Prof. N. B. Oyedeji, Prof. Y. A. Abdulkareem, Prof. Afusat T. Alabi and Prof. A. O. Sofoluwe. I am equally grateful to Drs: Y. A. Fasasi, R. O. Oduwaiye, P. A. Etejere, A. S. Omosidi, S. Oyeniran, N. J. K. Abdullahi (Mrs), A. A. Tijani, A. A. Atolagbe, H. A. Umaru, A. A. Lawal, A. T. Murtala, A. A. Sheu, O. J. Ojo, R. L. Abdulkareem, and D. J. Kayode. I am also grateful to Mrs. H. A. Yusuf, Mrs. I. C. Ogbudinkpa and Mr. B. A. Isiaka.

I also express my gratitude to my Ph.D. colleagues, most especially Alhaji Bello Y. Kehinde, Bala Bakwai, Ottan J., Hajiya Habiba Madami Yisa, Ustaz Adewale Suleiman, Mr. Omotayo, Mrs. Florence Adeleke and Mrs. Rebecca (Iya Ogbomoso), for

their pieces of advice, co-operation and accepting to keep my company throughout our stay in Ilorin.

I wholeheartedly wish to acknowledge the contributions of my research assistants, particularly Monday John and Nnaemeka Wondrous in Kaduna and Kano States. I also acknowledge all the institutions (Education, Banking, Science and Technology and Commerce and Industry) and the top management staff members that participated in this study in Kaduna, Kano, Katsina and Zamfara States.

Finally, I must not forget to acknowledge my family (My wife, Mrs. Grace Adedeji and my children, David, Goodness, Daniel and Daniella Adedeji) for their moral, emotional, material and financial supports during the period of this study.

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ABSTRACT

One of the challenges facing university graduates is unemployment. This is because university graduates have generally been described as poorly-trained and are deficient in employability skills. This study investigated labour market core skills requirements and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to:

A correlational research design was adopted for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select four states for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 306 out of 1,212 top management staff from educational, commercial, science and technology industries in the Selected States (Zamfara, Jigawa, Katsina and Kaduna). The instrument used for the study was a validated researcher-designed questionnaire with a test re-test reliability index of 0.89. Descriptive statistics of percentage and mean scores were used to analyse the demographic data of the participants and to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product-Moment Correlation statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

The findings of the study were that:

- i. employers of labour (in public and private sectors): required university graduates from different areas of specialisations, most especially from Science and Technology more than Education, Social Sciences and Arts (36.6%); required university graduates with 1st class honours in few cases while in most cases required graduates with 2nd class upper, 2nd class lower division and third class (30.7%); also, required university graduates with 5-9 years of work-related experiences (37.9%) than the others;
- ii. the soft skills competence levels of university graduates in communication, analytical and entrepreneurial skills were low with mean scores of 1.86, 1.81 and 1.71, respectively; while basic computer and interpersonal skills were moderate (mean scores = 2.18 and 2.12, respectively); and,
- iii. there was a significant relationship between labour market core skills requirements and universi

This study concluded that university graduates soft skills competence level in North-west was low and the implication of this is that the Nigerian universities needed to focus more on developing graduates soft skills. This study recommended that more emphasis should be placed on the soft skills competence of graduates and the curricular content of every area of specialisation should be reviewed to be more activity-based in meeting the skills required by employers of labour.

Word Count: 429

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Education.. is a means of strengthening an individual and the general society. Also, it is a solid instrument for developing human abilities... needed for national development. Tertiary education in Nigeria (universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and mono technics) has been approved as a means of training human capital required for sustainable development. Categorically, universities are saddled with the obligation of training high-level manpower within the setting of the needs and aspirations of the nation. As a result of the globalisation, information advancement.. and upset in the present-day learning-based economy, so much values have been set on universities in making, outfitting and disseminating information for sustainable...development and improved way of life.

Regardless of these noble goals, Sofoluwe and Etejere (2011) noticed that over the years the tertiary scholastic level has attracted underwhelming reactions, having fall short of providing the kind of education that would solve the problems of the country as a developing nation; such problems as abject poverty, corruption, unemployment and mismanagement of resources. This is traceable to the difficulties confronting the university education in Nigeria which are poor infrastructure, political influence, incessant industrial actions and under-funding. The issue of underfunding of education is

so endemic that it has now encompassed series of other problems which include shortage of human and material assets (Durosaro, 2000).

This circumstance pervades countries of the world, particularly African countries. Pauw, Ooshizen and Westhuizen (2007) found in South Africa that various graduates are incompetent in soft skills, workplace readiness and experience needed to succeed in the world of work. Boateng and Ofori-Sarpong (2002) likewise reported that in Ghana employers of labour alluded to the present graduates as those who did not possess essential skills to accomplish simple routine tasks and this gave the impression that certification is a mere formality rather than being a means of accomplishment. The situation is not distinctive in Nigeria as business owners affirmed that graduates are inefficiently prepared and ineffective at work. Nigerian graduates have been depicted differently as half-baked, ill-equipped, ill-trained, of poor quality, of a low standard and unemployable (Obayan, 2002). This clarified why the university education in Nigeria has not been able to consummate its mandate of endangering the high-level manpower needed for the national development in the required quality that can fit and compete favourably both at local and world labour markets.

Statement of the Problem

The trend of graduate employability has become an issue in the Nigeria labour market, especially for stakeholders like employers of labour, training institutions, parents and graduates. The Nigerian Employers Consultative Association (NECA) (2005) expressed that companies were not recruiting but adopting employment protection strategies due to the very poor quality graduates who do not meet demands of captains of industries.

The issue of unemployment is traceable to imbalance between labour market core skills requirements and soft skills competence of graduates. This gap, Kayode (2009) expressed, is responsible for the massive unemployment of graduates. Other researchers such as Dabalén, Oni and Adekola (2000), Mora (2008), Ajayi, Adeniji and Adu (2008), Pitan and Adedéji (2012) and Philips Consulting (2014). have carried out some researches on graduates employability skills, unemployment, entrepreneurial human capital development, economic future of Nigerian graduates and labour market prospects of university graduates in Nigeria but the gap identified by the researcher was that none of these mentioned researchers among others focused on labour market core skills requirements and university graduate soft skills competence for a relationship test in North-west geo-political zone of Nigeria. The researcher, therefore, considered it highly essential to investigate labour market core skills requirements and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this research would provide useful information to educational managers, employers of labour, policy makers and analysts, curriculum planners, students and academic researchers in identifying the critical variables influencing the employability of Nigerian University graduates and the nature of such effect.

The outcome of the study would help educational managers to look inward and devise series of means and procedure to develop students that would meet the required abilities and knowledge of current labour market. It would also enlighten government on how to plan for graduates in the country and to equally put the necessary machinery in place geared at repositioning the educational system to be more responsive to the needs

of the society. The outcome of the study would help in identifying and adopting strategies to overcome skills shortages which will make university administrators be more responsive providers of quality education.

The finding of the study would provide an opportunity to employers of labour to know the areas of weaknesses of graduates and how to organise training programmes to address these weaknesses. The findings of the study would provide the need to develop closer synergy between employers of labour and universities administrators that would help in the production of more quality graduates and the creation of employment opportunities.

The findings of the study would help policy makers and analysts to be more concerned with the understanding of graduate employability and offer a realistic description of the factors affecting individuals journeys in the labour market. The outcome of the study would also assist analysts and policy makers to move towards more sustainable long-term labour market strategies by helping to identify the range of labour market factors that hinder young graduates from moving into suitable work as well as the necessary interventions and their interconnections.

The result of the study would enable curriculum planners, university senates, directorates of academic planning in Nigerian universities to revisit academic curricula of their institutions for the purposes of including those labour demand that could possibly enhance the marketability of the university graduates in a more proactive way. It is hoped that the findings of this study would charge all the Nigerian universities to reflect on the need to equip graduates with profound scholastic abilities and a number of skills which would make them to be more work-ready.

Students may also find this study very useful as they prepare for the world of work. The findings of the study would enlighten students on the skills they are supposed to possess. A basis for further research in this area would be created as the discoveries of this study might filled the gap in the empirical research literature for the benefit of educational researchers and reviewers.

Scope of the Study

The geographical scope of the study was North-west Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. The zone comprises seven States namely; Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi, Jigawa and Zamfara. The North-west was selected for this study because it recorded the highest rate of unemployment of 30.0% (Ajaikaye, 2016). However, four States were selected for the study, these were Zamfara, Jigawa, Kaduna and Katsina States. These States were selected for the study in the North-west zone because they recorded the highest rates of unemployment (Zamfara, 42.6%, Jigawa, 35.9%)

They are generic in nature and could be acquired by all graduates regardless of their disciplines or area of study (Hager, Holland & Beckett, 2002).

The target population of the study comprised the top management staff in educational institutions, banking sector, commerce and manufacturing industries as well as science and technology industries with the total number of 1,212. The sample scope of the study was selected by using the Research Advisors (2006) at 95% confidence level of 5.0% margin of error to determine the sample size of 306. However, the sample for the study was 306 top management staff (which included 16 top management staff from SUBEB and 20 from TESCO, 20 directors and 25 supervisors from the States Ministry of Education, 24 registrars from the 24 tertiary institutions in the selected states, 84 bank

management staff across all the selected banks in the selected states, 64 top management staff from commerce and industry and 64 from different organisations in science and technology industry). The selection of these management staff was based on the reason that, as operational managers, university graduates work directly under them; also these management staff are charged with the responsibility of evaluating and assessing the university graduates under them.

The instrument for the study was a researcher-designed questionnaire titled: Labour Market Core Skills Requirements and University Graduate Soft Skills Competence Questionnaire (LMCSRUGSSCQ). This comprised two sections A and B. Section A comprised personal information of participants such as the name of organisation, types of organisation, locations and positions held. Section B consisted of thirty (30) items drawn from the research questions raised for the study.

Operational Definition of Terms

The following terms are operationally defined in the study.

Labour Market Core Skills Requirements: refer to the factors considered by employers of labour for university graduate employability. These are classes of degrees, areas of specialisations, work-related experience and age.

Core Skills: refer to those skills acquired in educational institutions which are classes of degrees, areas of specialisations and work-related experiences.

Classes of Degrees: refers categorisation of the university graduates based on academic performance in determining employability. These are 1st class, 2nd class upper, 2nd class lower, 3rd class and pass.

Areas of Specialisations: refer to Arts, Education, Social Sciences and Science and Technology.

Experience: refers to relevant years of work considered for the university graduates before entering the labour market.

Age Demand: refers to the age group of the university graduates considered for recruitment by employers of labour at the point of entering the labour market.

Soft Skills: are soft skills which are not specific to any academic programme but to all complex endeavours. These are communication, basic computer, analytical, entrepreneurial and interpersonal skills.

University Graduates: are those who passed through the university system and certificated as being competent in a particular field of study at first-degree level.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter focuses on the review of related and relevant literature of studies carried out by scholars and researchers on labour market core skills requirements and graduate soft skills competence. The chapter is organised under the following sub-headings:

- a. The University Education and Its Mandate
- b. Theoretical Framework
- c. Concept of Labour Market Core Skills Requirements
- d. Determinants of Labour Market Requirements
- e. Manpower Forecast Approaches
- f. Concept of Graduate Soft Skills Competence
- g. Empirical Studies
- h. Conceptual Framework
- i. Appraisal of the Literature Reviewed

The University Education and Its Mandate

University is a community of scholars, a cloistered home for contemplative scholars who share collegiality. The University is an academy of scholars, the highest and largest form of human and educational organisation with traditions and models of excellence and expertise in faculties and specialisations (Babatola, 2015). Babatola further described that the university education is a specialised and higher form of education. The university education is, therefore, an input and end-product of highly endowed scholarship and well organised academic instruction to knowledge, science

(methods) and culture which are tailored by the largest forms of specialised human organisation.

In accomplishing the stated goals of tertiary education, which typify the mandate of the university education in Nigeria, each university as a tertiary institution is required to attain its goals through vigorous pursuit of: quality teaching, research and community development. Others include provision of high quality of facilities, services and resources, staff development programmes and provision of more training modules pertinent to the needs of the labour market. University education helps in the creation and transmission of knowledge, abilities and aptitudes that empower students to succeed in a knowledge-based economy. Different modes of programmes are equally provided for students to acquire vital core skills required by captains of industry through full-time, part-time, sandwich and so on. Opportunity for acquisition of practical experiences are provided by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) and Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) in conjunction with tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

The training factor in expanding efficiency has never been questionable, particularly in cutting edge circumstance of specialised and logical advancement (Gods, 2008). Labour efficiency is identified with particular work abilities and state of mind of an individual; however, educational level is one of the vital productivity indicators. The captain of industries perceive the employees level of education as a productivity signal – the higher is the education level, the higher is the productivity. Besides educational consideration, there are other efficiency signals, for example, educational institution, academic programmes and even the nation where the education has been obtained.

Therefore, the major task in the process of human capital development is to provide the educational system that would meet the changing labour market requirements so that the educational system would be able to produce labour force corresponding to the needs of the future economy development tendencies and orientation towards knowledge-based economy. This theory is very important and relevant to the current situation of developing nations like Nigeria where demand for labour is low due to the belief of some employers of labour that graduates are poorly trained and unemployable because they could not meet up with labour market requirements. Therefore, human capital development theory provides the premise upon which this study sought to investigate labour market demand and university graduate employability skills in North-west, Nigeria.

This theory is very important and relevant to the current situation of developing nations like Nigeria where demand for labour is low due to the belief of some employers of labour that some graduates are poorly trained and unemployable because they could not meet up with labour market requirements due to soft skills mismatch. Therefore, Keynesian theory provides the premise upon which this study investigated labour market core skills requirements and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria as presented in figure 1.

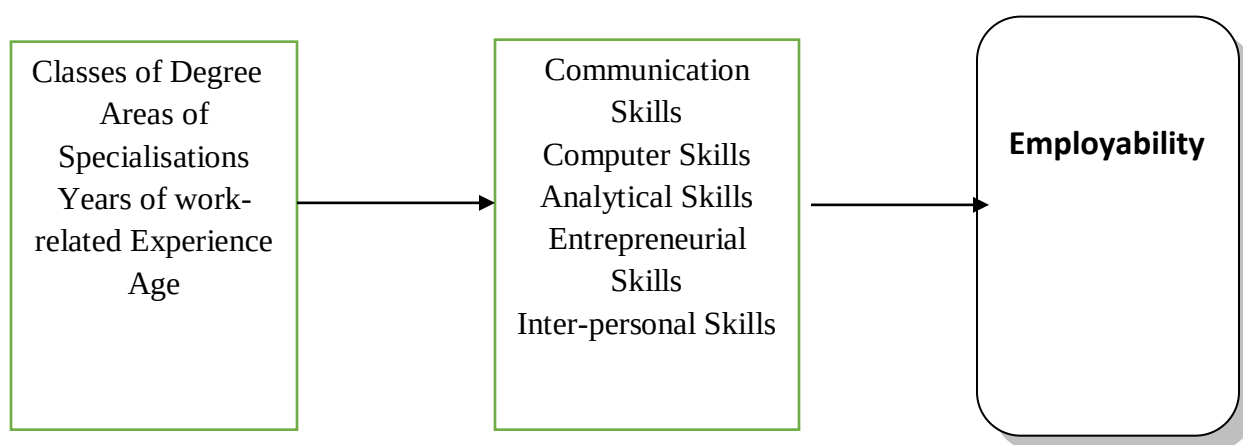


Figure 1: Labour Market Core Skills Requirements and University Graduate Employability

Source: The researcher (2017) adapted from Pitan Model (2016)

This model of graduate employability as depicted in Figure 1 is adapted from other existing models such the Career EDGE model of graduate employability by Pool and Sewell (2007) and Theoretical model on the relationships between job transitions, movement capital and perceived employability by Forrier, Verbruggen and De Cuyper (2015) and Pitan (2016) towards enhancing university graduate employability in Nigeria

Apart from conceptual support, this model is based on the identified components that will lead to enhanced employability of graduates. The arrows explain the relationship between the different components in the model which assume that if graduates meet the basic demand of employers and possess the related skills, their employability will be enhanced in the labour market.

Concept of Labour Market Core Skills Requirements

A market exists whenever a good or service is available for which there are both buyers (demanders) and sellers (suppliers). In the labour market, labour services are traded and those transactions happening between purchasers and vendors partly decide the position of specialists in occupation with determined wages, benefits, and state of employment (Kaufman & Hotchkiss, 2003).

In the most fundamental terms, the supply of labour refers to the quantity of individuals looking or currently seeking employment. The span of the labour supply is dictated by the quantity of people of working age (the working-age populace) also, the

extent of the working-age populace that desires to work (Kaufman & Hotchkiss, 2003). Other parts of labour supply incorporate the hours that staff work, the extension set forth by employees, and the aptitudes acquired by the workforce. Thus, labour supply is dictated by various elements including: the age dispersion of the population; retirement behaviour; movement patterns; education and training choices; fertility rates; the condition of the economy; and peoples choices concerning the assignment of time between work activities and recreation (Kaufman & Hotchkiss, 2003).

Louis (2005) referred to manpower supply as the availability of workers with the prerequisite aptitudes to match the labour demand of a firm. According to Folayan (2006), manpower supply is the source of filling the requirement establishment skills, inventory, management inventory and anticipated changes in presently employed personnel and their forecast status is analysed and compared with the gross manpower requirement. Cole (2005) expressed that in assessing the supply of labour available to an organisations, there are two areas to be reviewed, these areas are the existing workforce and the supply of potential employees. In the supply of manpower, answers need to be sought to questions such as:

- (i) what categories of staff do we have?
- (ii) what are the numbers in each category?
- (iii) what about age and sex distribution within the categories?
- (iv) what skills and qualification exist?
- (v) how many staff are suitable for promotion or re-deployment?
- (vi) how successfully are we in recruiting particular categories of staff? (p. 42)

When considering the existing supply of manpower available to the organisations, it is not just considering the numbers and categories at a particular point in time. It is also considering the organisations ability to continue to attract suitably recruits into its various operations and the rate at which employees are leaving the organisations. Drawing up plans to balance the manpower required and the manpower supply is very essential to meet the future manpower needs. This begins with an assessment of the present capabilities they build on and what is available to achieve this manpower inventory (Folayan, 2006).

Determinants of Labour Market Requirements

Demand for labour is influenced by some factors which among others are reviewed as the following:

Prices for Labour (Wages): Demand for labour is specifically influenced by the value of work and the productivity. There is an inverse relationship between the demand for labour and the wage rate. Law of decreasing marginal product expresses that as progressive units of one input (labour) are added to a static amount of additional input (capital), a level of aggregate profit is reached beyond which the marginal product of labour declines. The short-run demand for labour is controlled by the marginal income product for labour curve. In line with to Onwioduokit (2008), the economic theory postulated that labour demand, in the long run, is driven by the output, the (relative) price of labour and the capacity utilisation. While the output increases, more inputs must be utilised. If the production structure is determined, more inputs will develop at the same rate as output, so that each input remains a steady proportion to the output. In addition, employment can dictate by the (relative) cost of the labour and limit usage. Although an

expansion in output is usually linked to an increase in inputs, this is only necessary but not sufficient condition.

In a well-functioning labour market, the demand of labour is contrarily related to its cost. The higher the cost of labour, the lower its demand, the relative price of labour (the cost of labour with respect to that of different inputs such as capital) can likewise change the interest for labour by motivating the more concentrated utilisation of the generally least expensive input. As it were, generally less expensive capital will enhance firms to be more capital-intensive while relatively cheap labour will necessitate more labour-intensity. Labour demand is a derived demand when recruiting worker is not needed for its particular purpose but rather on the grounds that it helps in yielding output which adds to a business income and consequently benefits. The demand for extra measure of work depends on the Marginal Revenue Product (MRP) and the Marginal Cost (MC) of the labourer. The MRP is computed by duplicating the cost of the finished product or service by the Marginal Physical Product (MPP) of the labourer. On the off chance that if the MRP is more than a firms Marginal Cost (MC), at that point the firm will utilise the labourer since doing as such will increase benefit. The firm only employs however up to the point where $MRP=MC$, and not beyond, in economic theory (Onwioduokit, 2008).

The demand for labour comes from employers and is gotten from their need to employ specialist to create Moderates and services. Firms select their staffing levels as indicated by various of components, including: the cost of work; the efficiency of the workforce; the present and foreseen level of efficiency; and the value that the firm can

get for its output. Job openings emerge when firms increase their tasks and change employees who are leaving their employments, such as retirees.

Occupations: Another crucial element is the job under examination. Cappelli (2012) explained that free market conditions likely differ across the following occupations: teaching, truck driving, and computer programming. Mobility between occupations is limited by some Lowly obvious factors. Firstly, occupational licenses limit ones ability to work in a given occupation (for example, teachers need NCE or B. Ed. degrees to teach in Nigeria). Secondly, different skill sets and work experience are required for satisfactory job performance across occupations (Cappelli, 2012). Besides educational level, there are other productivity signals, such as educational institution, educational programmes and even the country where the education has been obtained. Heinz (2006) depends not only on its size but also on the complexity of the structure. Numbers of the manpower required in an organisations are not only the point but also the qualification of individual positions must be identified so that the best manpower could be chosen.

Technology: Technology change justifies the force behind the increasing demand for skilled workers. Autor, David, Katz, and Melissa (2008) affirmed that computerization sharply changed the combination of job responsibilities in production, expanding the interest for cognitive and relational abilities (required to perform unique undertakings), diminishing the capacities for diagnostic and mechanical aptitudes (utilised as a part of routine errands), while having minimal direct effect on the demand for non-routine manual aptitudes (utilised in manual tasks). These outcomes require a more extravagant form the expertise one-sided specialised change speculation in which new innovations and exceedingly skilled (highly educated) labourers are supplements for each other, yet

substitutes for moderately-skilled (moderately instructed) specialists, and have no critical relationship to low-skilled work (Autor, David, Katz & Melissa, 2008).

Government Policies: Policies are measures taken by a government to address issues, decide, allocate assets or values, activate strategies as a rule to do the things required of them by their constituencies (Aminu, Tella & Mbaya, 2012). Government policies on employment are made to decent and productive employment as a national priority and enable members of the labour force to gain productive and full employment (Evoh & Agu, 2016). Mbah and Agu (2013) put it that successive governments in Nigeria had adopted different programmes to create jobs and lessen unemployment. These programmes focused on small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) as veritable instruments to impact skills and provide financial assistance to the jobless people. Among these programmes was NEEDS. Adebayo and Ogunrinola (2006) indicated that for NEEDS to accomplish its goals there is need to design many incorporate projects that can create employment for women and youths to enhance growth and development. In combating unemployment problem, this further calls attention to the need for help in the informal sector to drastically reduce unemployment.

The effective government labour policies instruments targeted at graduate unemployment in National Directorate of Employment (NDE) scheme include the Start Your Own Business (SYOB) under the small Scale Enterprise programme (SSE), the sensitization of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) on Entrepreneurship development, the Graduate Attachment Programme (GAP) and the Solar Energy Training Scheme (SETS) which was recently introduced. However, the study will estimate the

government labour policy with the total number of persons that benefited from NDE graduate programmes annually (Anyawu, 2014).

Therefore, government policies affect employability as Anyawu (2014) put it that employment will only increase when Gross Domestic Product is increasing faster than productivity, likewise, the more noteworthy the amount of goods and services produced, the more prominent the labour required for production; because economic growth and employment go hand in hand.

Academic Qualifications: According to European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2008), qualification is a formal outcome of an appraisal and approval process which is acquired when a competent body establishes that an individual has accomplished learning outcomes to a pre-determined standard. Also, qualifications are carriers of information and value (currencies) extensively influencing the way individuals and education or training in relation to labour market institutions interact with each other (Cedecop, 2009). A qualification is expressed in a formal document (certificate, degree, diploma or award) which depends on norms and specifications applying to the following aspects of qualifications;

- (a) occupation standards determine the primary jobs that individuals do, portraying the expert tasks and activities in addition to the abilities of a specific career. Occupation standards answer the question what do the students need to be able to do in employment?
- (b) education standards characterise the expected result of the learning procedure, pointing to the award of a qualification, the examination programme in terms of content, learning goals and timetable showing teaching processes and learning environments, such

as institutions or school-based learning. Educational benchmarks inquire answer what students need to figure out to be effective in employment?

(c) assessment models determine the object of assessment, criteria, techniques and the components of the job required for the award of qualification. Evaluation guidelines provide answers the student would realise what has been learned and is able to do grant employment? (Mansfield, 2001: 11).

The term qualification helps to clarify what can be considered as the following:

(a) learning outcomes; a qualification must clarify what the holder is expected to know, be able to do and understand. A qualifications relevance to future recipients depends on its ability to signal learning outcomes clearly.

(b) assessment and approval processes; a qualification is founded on reliable and valid assessment procedures which captures the essence of the knowledge, skills and competences held by an individual learner:

(c) need for standards: standards are critical to qualifications as they define what a student should be able to learn. Standards can be seen as the reference point around which the entire qualification process turns. Standards are also critical for relevance of the qualification to future users (for example, in labour market) as they define the level and profile to be achieved.

(d) recognition process: a qualification is a paper of value and its currency depends on a formal stamp of approval or recognition. Recognition can be seen as the final step in the qualification process affirming that the procedure has been appropriately properly completed and that the qualification can be trusted (Cedecop, 2009: 9).

The qualification enables its holder to prove competences, skills and experience and it gives the recipients, the employer, a trusted basis on which to judge the qualified persons labour market value. This implies that a capability is not seen as characteristic of a person in the sense of competence but is viewed as the substantial result of a procedure. In this sense, qualification represents a kind of currency accepted with what has been called a zone mutual trust. Qualification standards are powerful coordination mechanism for improving the demand and provision of education, training and learning (Cedecop, 2009). Qualifications served as the interface between the worlds of work and education. They are granted because of a learning process to be used on labour market. Accordingly, the honour of a qualification can be founded on regulation of the learning procedure or on labour market requirement.

Academic Qualifications: According to European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2008), qualification is a formal outcome of an appraisal and approval process which is acquired when a competent body establishes that an individual has accomplished learning outcomes to a pre-determined standard. Also, qualifications are carriers of information and value (currencies) extensively influencing the way individuals and education or training in relation to labour market institutions interact with each other (Cedecop, 2009). A qualification is expressed in a formal document (certificate, degree, diploma or award) which depends on norms and specifications applying to the following aspects of qualifications;

(a) occupation standards determine the primary jobs that individuals do, portraying the expert tasks and activities in addition to the abilities of a specific career. Occupation standards answer the question what do the students need to be able to do in employment?

(b) education standards characterise the expected result of the learning procedure, pointing to the award of a qualification, the examination programme in terms of content, learning goals and timetable showing teaching processes and learning environments, such as institutions or school-based learning. Educational benchmarks inquire answer what students need to figure out to be effective in employment?

(c) assessment models determine the object of assessment, criteria, techniques and the components of the job required for the award of qualification. Evaluation guidelines provide answers the student would realise what has been learned and is able to do grant employment? (Mansfield, 2001: 11).

The term qualification helps to clarify what can be considered as the following:

(a) learning outcomes; a qualification must clarify what the holder is expected to know, be able to do and understand. A qualifications relevance to future recipients depends on its ability to signal learning outcomes clearly.

(b) assessment and approval processes; a qualification is founded on reliable and valid assessment procedures which captures the essence of the knowledge, skills and competences held by an individual learner:

(c) need for standards: standards are critical to qualifications as they define what a student should be able to learn. Standards can be seen as the reference point around which the entire qualification process turns. Standards are also critical for relevance of the qualification to future users (for example, in labour market) as they define the level and profile to be achieved.

(d) recognition process: a qualification is a paper of value and its currency depends on a formal stamp of approval or recognition. Recognition can be seen as the final step in the

qualification process affirming that the procedure has been appropriately properly completed and that the qualification can be trusted (Cedecop, 2009: 9).

The qualification enables its holder to prove competences, skills and experience and it gives the recipients, the employer, a trusted basis on which to judge the qualified persons labour market value. This implies that a capability is not seen as characteristic of a person in the sense of competence but is viewed as the substantial result of a procedure. In this sense, qualification represents a kind of currency accepted with what has been called a zone mutual trust. Qualification standards are powerful coordination mechanism for improving the demand and provision of education, training and learning (Cedecop, 2009). Qualifications served as the interface between the worlds of work and education. They are granted because of a learning process to be used on labour market. Accordingly, the honour of a qualification can be founded on regulation of the learning procedureh or on labour market requirement.

Area of Specialisations: is expressed as an academic discipline aimed at limiting the freedom of individuals and as a way of constraining discourses (Bridges, 2006). There is more to the discipline than the subject taught in an scholastic setting. Bridges (2006) enumerated a whole list of criteria and characteristics which indicate whether a subject is indeed a distinct discipline or not. Thus: disciplines

(a) have a specific object of research (Law, Society, Politics, Education, Management and so on);

- (b) have a body of accumulated specialist knowledge alluding to their object of research which is specific to them and not generally shared with another discipline;
- (c) have theories and concepts that can organise the accumulated specialist knowledge effectively;
- (d) use specific languages or a particular specialised terms associated to their specific research prerequisites and
- (e) must have some institutional indications in the form of subjects taught at universities or colleges, respective academic departments and professional affiliations associated with to it (p. 268).

Academic disciplines can be treated as a particular type of the division of labour and as a crucial aspect of the overall professionalisation of science. Professionalising academic discipline enables academics to gain the freedom of following their own pursuits and professional intellects (Whitley, 2000). Therefore, academic disciplines have all the main characteristics of other professions: for instance, they have collegiate autonomy over professional training and certification of professional competence; they have a distinct set of knowledge and skills that is institutionalised in a curriculum; they have distinct professional ethics and there is a community of professionals that cultivates a distinct professional habitus (Beck & Young, 2005).

Division of labour is an integral aspect of modern society, and specialising in one occupation remains an essential feature of the labour market experience. However, in many professional and highly skilled occupations, specialisation occurs prior to entering the labour market when an individual chooses a major field of study in a university. The timing of such academic specialisation varies widely across different systems of higher

education. In some systems, students are required to choose a field of study early, but in others students may postpone this decision until much later.

Work Experience: Work experience and qualifications are usually seen as a proxy for employability skills (Finnie & Meng, 2007). Experience requirements are stated in terms of competencies and skills rather than years. Employers of labour force are not only interested in those having advanced knowledge but as well down to earth abilities proper for work satisfaction (Abiodun, 2010).

Scrapetetta, Sonnet, Livanos, Nunez, Riddell and Song (2012) reiterated that a number of countries have expanded recently to encourage the acquisition of work experience: as much as paid or unpaid internships can help to increase the employability skills of young people, their quality is often not secured. According to them, such issues put young people are in danger of being exploited as a cheap labour for employers.

Although, the years of work-related experience bring about efficiency and productivity but the issue of stretching years of experience and age limit by the employers as criteria for employment has narrowed chances for employment. A 31-year-old unemployed graduate of Economics lamented thus; I wonder where some of these people want us to get the experience if we were not given the opportunity to even start. In most cases, employers insist on a 25-year age limit and five years work experience. But with the challenges people are faced before graduating in this country, how do you expect a 25-year-old to have acquired a five-year experience? (Asaju, Arome & Anyio, 2014:24).

However, work experiences are acquired by temporary employment in many European countries such as United Kingdom, Ireland, Belgium, France, Finland, Italy and

Spain among others and can be seen as stepping stones into permanent employment. The likelihood of youngsters getting a stable job one year after working at a casual job is higher than after being unemployed. This likelihood, however, is much more stringent for university graduates than for those with lower levels of education (Scrapetta, Sonnet, Livanos, Nunez, Riddell, & Song, 2012).

On the contrary, Yorke (2004) cautioned that it is a oversight to accept that the provision of experience, whether higher education or without, is a sufficient condition for enhanced employability. Henceforth, one could say that to acquire work experience does not of itself ensure that the student develops (further) the various prerequisites (cognitive, social, practical, and so on) for success in employment. The same argument applies to the whole curricula.

In view of the suggestions, Mcquaid, Greig and Adams (2004) summarised thus that;

- i. demand factors - these include local labour market factors (such as the level and nature of local and regional or other labour demand, location issues, centrality/remoteness of local labour markets in relation to centres of industry/employment, levels of competition for jobs);
- ii. macroeconomic factors - these are macroeconomic stability, level and nature of labour demand within the national economy and so on);
- iii. vacancy characteristic factors (remuneration, conditions of work, working hours and prevalence of shift work, opportunities for progression, extent of part-time, temporary and casual work, availability of entry-level positions if appropriate, and so on); and

iv. recruitment factors (including employers formal recruitment and selection procedure and general selection preferences, employer discrimination, form and extent of employers use of informal networks (p. 74).

Sources of Labour Demand: Dabalen, Oni and Adekola (2000) identified three major sources of employment for Nigerian University graduates. These are;

(a). The public sector; the public sector comprises government ministries, schools and parastatals. Traditionally, the public sector is regarded as a major employer of graduates from universities and other tertiary institutions. The establishment surveys showed that the public sector in Nigeria absorbed about 60% of the formal sector workers in the 1990s (Dabalen et al., 2000).

(b) The private sector; A review of labour market research in Nigeria led to two consistent observations concerning graduate employment in the private sector. Firstly, the share of graduate employments in the private sector, both historically and at present, had been smaller than the share in the public sector. Secondly, the share of graduates finding jobs in the public sector has fallen drastically relative to the private and self-employment sector. These bleak prospects for graduate employment have caught the attention of policy-makers as well as media commentators. It is hard to ignore labour market studies that reported high unemployment rates among graduates. One of these is the manpower survey by the Manpower Board in which only 51% of those who graduated in 1994/95 claimed to have been employed in contrast to an overall graduate employment rate of 80% for all participants to this particular study. The estimate is also consistent with the recent labour market studies that reported 22% of the graduates surveyed as unemployed (National Manpower Board, 1998).

The National Manpower Board: is a self-governing Federal Government parastatal mandated to research into and advise on, co-ordinate and advance the optimal development (training) and utilisation (employment) of Nigerias human resources. The Board was charged by the National Economic Council (NEC) in December, 1960 and the Board was established in 1962 (Babalola, 2006). The Board was charged with the following responsibilities to;

1. decide and prompt the government on the nations labour needs in all occupations;
2. define labour advancement and utilization arrangements and programmes;
3. co-ordinate manpower strategies and programmes governments (federal, state and local);
4. gather, collate, analyze and circulate manpower and employment information and data;
5. make inputs into the;
 - (i) definition of approaches and programmes of manpower improvement and usage of government parastatals;
 - (ii) preparation of intermittent all-inclusive plans for the facilitated improvement of institutions of higher learning;
 - (iii) detailing of training programmes by all parastatals, including ministries, corporations and government-owned companies;
 - (iv) formulation of policies governing scholarships and students loans tenable within or outside Nigeria;
 - (v) detailing and outlining of approaches for job generation, efficiency and skill development and

(vi) execution of labour strategies and processes relating to expatriate employment, the training, efforts of private firms and the involvement of Nigerians in the management of business activities.

6. recognise in conjunction with professional bodies and establishments, the stock stream and conveyance of professional manpower;

7. arrange and conduct seminars, workshops, conferences, symposia and other research and training activities;

8. disseminate information on labour issues.

(c) Self-employment; this is the self-generated employment by an individual. Available statistics in Nigeria indicated that the informal sector contributes about 60 per cent to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In developing countries like Nigeria the informal sector is effective as it contributes extraordinarily to the economic development in the country (Federal Office of Statistic, 2012). The activities which are considered purely as informal sector are: selling fruits and vegetables; sustenance activities, sale and processing, selling clothes and shoes (both new and second-hand); Kiosk selling various items; water kiosks; small retailers or hawkers who sell cereals, home supplies, fuels and other Moderates; small manufacturing, production, construction and repair of Moderates. Others incorporate craftsmen, hair dressing, furniture, entertainment industry, educational services and so on (World Bank, 2010: 32-33).

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8. disseminate information on labour issues.

Briggs (2007) arranged sources of recruitment into internal and external. He expressed that the extent to which these sources will be utilized relies upon the specific conditions of organisations as well as its rationality of tasks. The internal source implies that employees know about the framework about the system and the organisations. Also, they have information about their aptitudes, capacities and right conduct at work. The employees recruited internally are either seeking lateral moves (job changes that involve no major changes in responsibility or authority levels like transfers) or promotions (Jones, George & Hill, 2007). Internal sources are not costly and are less time-consuming contrasted with external sources (Briggs, 2007).

External recruitment is used especially for lower entry jobs in times of expansion and for positions whose specific prerequisites cannot be met by the present employees within the organisations. There are multiple means through which an organisations can recruit externally, such means include advertisements in electronic (including internet) and print media, private and public employment agencies, work-ins by job seekers, employee referrals, academic institutions, professional associations, unions and informal networks (Jones et al, 2007). The advantages of external recruitment include having access to a potentially large pool, being able to attract people to the firm who have skills, knowledge and abilities the organisations needs to accomplish its objectives and having the capacity to bring in newcomers who may be up-to-date on the recent technology. The burdens of external recruitment include high costs of enlistment and training, lack of knowledge about inner workings of the organisations and uncertainty about the performance of the potential employees. In any case, the many-sided quality of

recruitment is limited by planning of sound human resources after careful review of the strength and shortcomings of the environment (Briggs, 2007).

Over the years, the web has had a big impact on recruitment, selection and job seeking (Green, De Hoyos, Li & Owen, 2011). With the advent of the internet, the volume of employment adverts in the print media has declined significantly. However, the internet may be utilised with other strategies of recruitment. A daily newspaper advert or an advert in a shop window may guide a job seeker to a website for details of how to apply for a vacancy. While Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has turned out to be progressively essential for people to access jobs with the use of some conventional recruitment techniques. In a slack labour market, a few managers may be increasingly likely to use informal methods of recruitment, rather than to bear the costs of formal recruitment methods (Atfield, Green, Purecell, Staniewicz & Owen, 2011). The revolution of the internet, through job mobility portal, has created opportunities for bringing together vacancies across public employment services in different countries and of submission of job applications electronically. This implies that job seekers can search for vacancies more quickly and over a wider geographical area than was formerly the case (Green, et al, 2011). While the web remains a formidable tool for job seekers, Tunstall, Lupton, Green, Whatmough and Bates (2012) expressed that there is a peril that relative instance of electronic application may guide to job seekers either adopting an inefficient scattergun approach of relatively large numbers of untargeted applications as opposed to a more efficient targeted approach, or becoming too reliant on the internet and neglecting other job-searching methods. This might include hiding behind the internet rather than adopting a more proactive system including reaching the employers.

The major producers of employment and labour statistics are Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity, National Bureau of Statistics and National Manpower Board. As indicated by these agencies, sources of compiling employment and labour statistics can be grouped into three. These are:

- (a) population census
- (b) household-based surveys, establishment censuses and surveys and
- (c) administrative sources

Population Census: A population census is conducted at regular intervals of ten years in most countries. The National Population Commission (NPC) is responsible for conducting population censuses in Nigeria. Populace information such as ages, areas and sex-specific total of people are normally made available to users by the NPC. Collection and cross-examination by employment categories and other characteristics are also made accessible on request from the NPC whose information handling activities are computerised. It should be noted that population census data are also relevant in the production of employment statistics. This is on the account that they provide the basis for appraising and anticipating survey-based estimates and also as denominator factors for processing important employment indicators.

Manpower Forecast Approaches

Armstrong (2003) defined demand forecasting as the process of estimating the future numbers of people required and the likely skills and competences they will need. Forecasting uses information from the past and present to identify expected future conditions. Projections for the future are, obviously, subject to error. Changes in the conditions on which the anticipations are based might even completely invalidate them, which is the chance forecasters take (Wurim, 2013). However, manpower requirement is the number of individuals required to complete a specific job (Cole, 2005). Folayan (2006) submitted that labour requirement is estimating future needs for individuals and competencies by reference to corporate and utilitarian plans and the forecast of the future activity levels. It is the process of computing approximately the future numbers of essential manpower and the likely skills and competencies they will need. Louis (2005) opined that manpower approach is a process to decide what number and what sort of specialists the organisations need to accomplish its goals.

For what reasons should organisations concern themselves with demand forecasting? There are several Moderate reasons to conduct demand forecasting. It can help: (i) quantify the jobs necessary for producing a given number of Moderates, or offering a given amount of services, (ii) determine what staff-mix is desirable in the future, (iii) assess appropriate staffing levels in different parts of the organisation so as to avoid unnecessary costs, (iv) prevent shortage of people where and when they are needed

most, and (v) monitor compliance with legal requirements with regard to reservation of jobs (Aswathappa, 2005:74).

In theory and practice, there are so many techniques used in forecasting the demand for human resources. According to McGraw-Hill (2002), labour demand is based on three different sources that can be viewed from figure 2:



Figure 2: Causes of Demand for Human resources in the Future

Source: McGraw-Hill (2002)

1. **External Factor:** The demand for certain categories of employees and skill is also influenced by changes in political, legal and social structure in an economy. Technology, however, is a double-edged weapon therefore making its influence on human Resource plan difficult to predict. Demand in one department (book keeping, for example) may decrease while increasing it in another (such as computer operations). High technology with all its attendant benefits may compel organisations to go lean and downsize workforce suddenly. Employment planning under such

situations becomes complicated. Based on this, forecasting is perceived more as an art than a science, providing inexact approximations rather than absolute results. The ever-changing environment in which an organisation operates contributes to this problem (McGraw-Hill, 2002).

2. **Organisational Decisions:** Human resource planning needs to consider the organisations strategic plans, sales and production forecasts and new ventures to be more precise on the ground that it operates as an open framework. Accessing changes, for instance, in product or service demand is a fundamental forecasting concern, as is anticipating changes in national or regional economics. This empowers the planning expert to conjecture the essential production plans and consequently assess whether additionally workforce is needed in future. Where designs are changed, the effect of the changes must be assessed. Proposed expansion, contraction or diversification of the organisations activities will obviously affect the demand for labour in general or for particular skills. This may be estimated by market research, statistical survey, trends in technological advances and so on.
3. **Workforce factors:** Demand is not only affected by the external and organisational factors but also by the internal in and out transistions of the employees through retirements, terminations, abdications, deaths and leaves of absence, and so on. These activities by employees become lowly predictable, once you increasingly invest more energy with the organisation or a specific industry. These decide how much labour will be required, given the expected productivity or work rate of various sorts of employee and the expected volume of business action. In this manner, the cost of

existing work such as overtime, training, benefits and so on will put a budgetary limitation on the organisations manpower levels.

However, labour demand forecasting uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches. These approaches complement each other and provide a more comprehensive forecast through the efforts of both theoreticians and practitioners.

Qualitative Approach: In this approach, forecasting is less statistical. It is based on the interests, abilities, and aspirations of individual employees with the current and future staffing needs of an organisation. Experts of this approach forecasts to anticipate staffing requirements estimating the future human resource requirements, their experiences and judgments to Moderate effect. Some of the techniques in this approach are presented in figure 3 as follows:

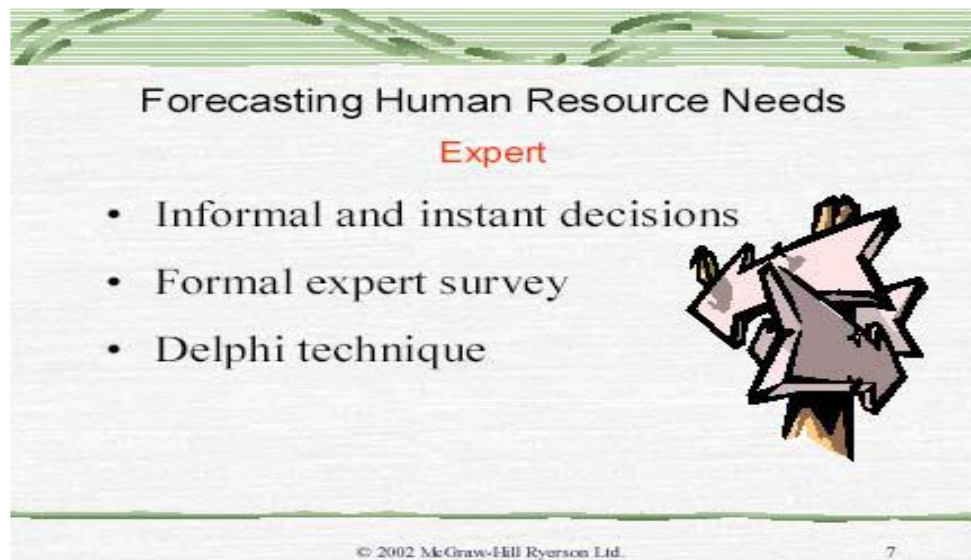


Figure 3: Forecasting Human Resource Needs

Source: McGraw-Hill (2002)

1. **Informal and Instant Decisions and Formal Expert Survey:** Management forecasts are the opinions (judgments) of supervisors, department managers, experts, or others knowledgeable about the organisations future employment needs.
2. **Delphi Technique:** The Delphi technique is a subjective method used to predict future personnel needs of an organisation by integrating the independent opinions of experts. The technique involves a large number of experts who take turns at presenting their forecasts and assumptions. An intermediary passes each experts forecast and assumptions to the others, who then make revisions in their forecasts. This procedure proceeds until the last forecast is made (Wurim, 2013).

Quantitative Approach: Quantitative approaches to forecasting deal with estimation through the use of statistical or mathematical techniques; they are the techniques utilised by theoreticians and expert planners. Some of these approaches include:

- i. **Regression Model:** Fluctuations in labour levels are anticipated utilising pertinent factors, such as sales.
- ii. **Time-Series:** Model Fluctuations in labour levels are anticipated by disconnecting pattern, occasional, repeating, and sporadic impacts.
- iii. **Economic Model:** Fluctuations in labour levels are anticipated utilising a predetermined type of creation work.
- iv. **Linear Programming Model:** Fluctuations in labour levels are broken down utilising a target work and additionally organisational and ecological factor.

- v. **Markov Model:** Fluctuations in labour levels are anticipated utilising recorded change rates.

Based on the different approaches to manpower forecast, Agboola and Adeyemi () made a projection of Academic Staff for Nigerian Universities by the Year 2020 as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Projected Academic Staff for Nigerian Universities by Year 2020

Year	Projected Student Enrollment	Projected Academic Staff	Yearly Required Academic Staff	Additional Academic Staff
2009	1,232,243	61,612	-	
2010	1,417,080	70,854	9,242	
2011	1,629,641	81,482	10,628	
2012	1,874,088	93,704	12,222	
2013	2,155,201	107,760	14,056	
2014	2,478,482	123,924	16,164	
2015	2,850,254	142,513	18,589	
2016	3,277,792	163,890	21,377	
2017	3,769,461	188,473	24,583	
2018	4,334,880	216,744	28,271	
2019	4,985,112	249,256	32,512	
2020	5,732,878	286,644	37,388	

Agboola and Adeyemi (2013)

Table 1 revealed that the university system would require 70,854 academic staff for a projected student enrollment of 1,417,080 in 2010 and 286,644 staff for 5,732,878 students in 2020.

Concept of Graduate Soft Skills Competence

Employment skills have become increasingly vital in the globalised world. Skill is the unique potential or mastery to accomplish something great by learning and having a specific training exercise (Adebisi, 2014). Fakomogbon and Adegbiya (2011) perceived it as the expertise or ability developed in the course of training and experience. Aderogba

(2011) referred to it as the ownership of expertise required for progression in a particular job employment.

Competence is the ability to combine and apply relevant attributes to particular tasks in particular context (Danner & Pessu, 2013). Competency is the observable and measurable capacities of an employee in a labour market on a standard scale. Competency is a composite of skills, knowledge, attitudes or personal traits (Grzeda, 2005). It is the ability of an individual to perform his duties effectively and efficiently, which requires the possession of specific knowledge, skills and personal attributes deemed important to both the job requirements and context of the industry (Salleh, Yusoff, Amat, Noor, & Suredah, 2013).

Robinson (2000) portrayed employability aptitudes as the fundamental abilities required for one to get a job and engender him or her to carryout duties well. Kazilan, Hamzah and Bakar (2009) described employability skills as combination of vital abilities ingrained in every person to produce outstanding workforce. This is parallel with individuals who have strong characteristics such as a high sense of self, innovativeness, productiveness, skillfulness and competitiveness, a strong sense of determination and creativity in facing the challenges of the nation as well as globalisation in the 21st century. Employability skills are the significant subset of a broader set of generic skills. Rychen and Salganik (2001) identified four major conceptual elements in generic competencies. These are:

(i) multi-functional; they meet a range of different and important demands of daily life. They are needed to achieve different goals and to solve multiple problems in different contexts;

- (ii) relevant across many fields; they are relevant for participation in school, the labour market, political processes, social networks and interpersonal relationships, including family life and for developing a sense of social wellbeing;
- (iii) a high order of mental complexity; they assume a mental autonomy which involves an active and reflective approach to life and
- (iv) multi-dimensional: they are composed of know-how, analytical, cultural, communication skills and common sense (p. 54).

Employability skills are those skills necessary for getting, keeping and being successful in a job. These are the skills and attitudes that enable employees to get along with their colleagues, to make critical decisions, solve problems, develop respect, and ultimately become strong ambassadors for the organisations (Sodipo, 2014). These skills (soft) are usually lacking in graduates that are just out of school and even those already in employment. Organisations spend a lot of time and money training staff, not only in job-specific areas but also in general and basic skills. In time of high unemployment as in the nation presently, employers have more choices of applicants and will often favour those with well-rounded employability skills. Such skills according to Skills You Need (2013) include:

- (i) interpersonal skills: these are used to interact with people, participate effectively as members of a team, negotiate, satisfy customers, make decisions, manage time and work effectively with others;
- (ii) communication skills: are ability to write clearly and succinctly, to demonstrate Moderate vocabulary and listen actively;

- (iii) critical thinking skills: refer to ability to solve problems and make decisions. These are huge assets to employers. They include planning and organising creative thinking, innovative and inventive ways of adding value to the work environment;
- (iv) personal development: refers to the right attitude towards work and the organisations. Employers look for individuals who are open to learning and embrace change. Such a person will be more successful than the person who is afraid of learning and resistant to changes in the organisations;
- (v) self-management skills - refer to self-motivation, self-confidence and self-control to manage emotion and react to challenges and problems both at work and private lives;
- (vi) presentation skills: are abilities required to present information clearly and effectively in the workplace. These include business plans, reports and minutes.
- (vii) leadership skill: is the capacity to influence others towards goal achievement;
- (viii) numeracy: involves understanding of numerical data, statistics and graphs that can be used for making decisions and reasoning; and
- (ix) IT skills: which deal with acquiring basic IT skills with the computer that is used to provide a wide range of employment opportunities and increase marketability in workplaces (Skills You Need, 2013:33).

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Employability results from several factors such as foundation of core skills, access to education, availability of training opportunities, motivation, ability and support to take advantage of opportunities for continuous learning, and recognition of acquired skills. This is basic to empowering workers accomplish a task, oversee change and for empowering organisation to introduce new technological advancement and enter new markets (ILO, 2008). Robinson (2000) portrayed employability aptitudes as the fundamental abilities required for one to get a job and engender him or her to carryout duties well. Kazilan, Hamzah and Bakar (2009) described employability skills as

combination of vital abilities ingrained in every person to produce outstanding workforce. This is parallel with individuals who have strong characteristics such as a high sense of self, innovativeness, productiveness, skillfulness and competitiveness, a strong sense of determination and creativity in facing the challenges of the nation as well as globalisation in the 21st century. Employability skills are the significant subset of a broader set of generic skills. Rychen and Salganik (2001) identified four major conceptual elements in generic competencies. These are:

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- (xvii) numeracy: involves understanding of numerical data, statistics and graphs that can be used for making decisions and reasoning; and
- (xviii) IT skills: which deal with acquiring basic IT skills with the computer that is used to provide a wide range of employment opportunities and increase marketability in workplaces (Skills You Need, 2013:33).

Classification of Skills

Employability skills are basically classified into two. These are core and soft skills.

Core Skills: are known as hard or technical skills. Hard skills are specific technical factual knowledge required to perform a task. These skills can be termed as what you know (Hunt, 2007). Hard skills are the technical skills found in various specialisations such as including programming languages, communications, operating system skills, and networks (Snyder, Rupp & Thornton, 2006). Hard skills include the specific knowledge and abilities required for success in a job. Hard skills are teachable abilities that can be defined and measured. Hard skills are easy to prove with certificates, education degree, awards and so on.

Pardy Group (2012) described core skills as Discipline related or Content specific skills which are taught, learned in schools and from books. Core skills are the requirements that determine success in workplaces. Such skills include Pharmacy skills, Biology skills, Architecture skills, Computer skills, Math skills, Therapeutic skills, Teaching skills, Graphic design skills and so on. Hard skills are observable, quantifiable and measurable. A person may take accounting courses, then take advanced accounting

courses, then work to get experience, then take an exam to become a Chartered Professional Accountant, CPA (Pardy Group, 2012).

Soft Skills: are interpersonal, human, people or behavioural skills that can be used for application of technical skills and knowledge in the workplace (Rainsbury, Hodges, Burchell & Lay, 2002). James and James (2004) suggested that soft skills are a new way to describe a set of abilities or talents that an individual can bring to the workplace. Soft skills can be called micro social skills and categorize them as: intrapersonal and interpersonal skills; personal and social skills; and cognitive skills (Muzio, Fisher, Thomas & Peters, 2007).

Pardy Group (2012) described soft skills as those not closely associated with a specific programme of study (major) or career field but are applicable to all workplaces or careers and can transfer across all disciplines; so often soft skills are referred to as transferable skills. He further described soft skills as the non-technical skills necessary for success in the workplace. Such as interpersonal skills, human relations skills, social skills, organisational management skills, time management skills, critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, and so on. Soft skills are hard to observe, quantify, or measure because they are associated with behaviours and personality traits of an individual.

Ciappei (2015) categorized soft skills as political and ethical skills. This is as presented in figure 4.

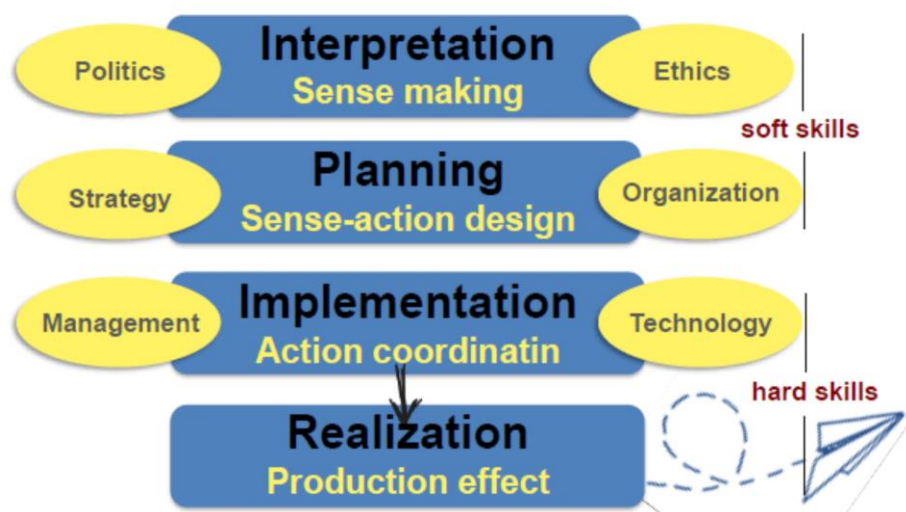


Figure 4. Taxonomy of Skills

Source: Ciappei (2015)

Ciappei classified soft skills as political and ethical skills: strategic and organisational skills while the third one corresponds to Hard Skills: Managerial and Technological Skills. According to him, politics and ethics allow the interpretation, strategy and organisation into planning and management as well as technology which enable the coordination of actions. All these skills lead to the realization and then to the production of the effect.

Digvijay and Pachauri (2014) affirmed that soft skills comprised several sub-skills. These sub-skills are divided into two categories of implementation: the soft skills that every individual must have and the soft skills that are good to have. This is as presented in table 2:

Studies on the skills needed from new graduates have shown that employers seek generic skills that can be applied in a variety of jobs or industries, rather than skills that are job-specific. Thus, employers seek generic skills from graduates and the most recent research results have shown that the most important generic skills for employers are communication skills (Ngoo, Tiong & Pok, 2015; McMurray, Dutton, McQuaid & Richard, 2016); team-work skills (Adebakin, Ajadi & Subair, 2015; McMurray et al. 2016); cognitive, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills (Collet, Hine, du Plessis, 2015); critical thinking and problem solving skills (Ngoo et al. 2015); information and communication technology, decision-making, analytic and problem-solving skills (Adebakin et al. 2015); and interpersonal and adaptability skills (McMurray et al. 2016).

A lot of researchers, Dabalén, Oni and Adekola (2000), David (2002); Akerele (2004) and National University Commission (2004), have established that employers of labour emphasised more on other attributes (non-academic skill requirements) other than the graduate qualifications. According to them, these attributes include analytical skills, Moderate communication skills, Moderate personal and social skills, technical and managerial skills among others. As Boeteng and Ofori-Sarpong (2002) therefore related these aptitudes to experience requirements in terms of competencies and skills, Abiodun, (2010) affirmed that labour force employers consider not only graduates with higher education but those with ownership of appropriate skills.

Ismail and Mohammad (2015) outlined the combinations of core, soft and personal attributes of Electrical Technology Education (ETE) graduates in table 3 thus:

Table 3: ETE Curriculum Structure

Course Title	Credit Units	Types of Skills	Course Mode
Basic Electrical Engineering I	2	Core Skill	Theory
Basic Electrical Engineering Lab I	1	Core Skill	Practical
Electrical Installation I	2	Core Skill	Theory
Electrical/Electronic Technology	3	Core Skill	Theory
Instrumentation and Measurement	2	Core Skill	Theory
Basic Electrical Engineering II 2	2	Core Skill	Theory
Basic Electrical Engineering Lab II	2	Core Skill	Practical
Electrical/Electronic Drafting I	1	Core Skill	Practical
Basic Electrical Power	2	Core Skill	Theory
Basic Electrical Machines	2	Core Skill	Theory
Electrical Installation II	2	Core Skill	Theory
Technical Drawing 2	2	Core Skill	Theory
Material Science 2	2	Core Skill	Theory
Applied Mechanics I	2	Core Skill	Theory
Applied Mechanics II	2	Core Skill	Theory
Circuit Theory	2	Core Skill	Theory
Electrical/Electronic Drafting II 2	2	Core Skill	Practical
Energy Conversion	2	Core Skill	Theory
Power System Engineering I	2	Core Skill	Theory
Strength of Materials 2	2	Core Skill	Theory
Strength of Materials Lab among others	2	Core Skill	Theory
Measurement and Evaluation I	2	Core Skill	Theory
Educational Technology	2	Core Skill	Theory
Psychology of Education I	2	Core Skill	Theory
Psychology of Education II	2	Core Skill	Theory
Research Methods I	2	Core Skill	Theory
Measurements and Evaluation II	2	Core Skill	Theory
Sociology of Education	2	Core Skill	Theory
Research Methods II	2	Core Skill	Theory
History and Philosophy of Education	2	Core Skill	Theory
Introduction to Technology Education	1	Core Skill	Theory
Vocational Guidance	2	Core Skill	Theory
Special Methods in Sc. & Tech. Educ.	2	Core Skill	Theory
Teaching Practice	6	Core Skill	Theory
Industrial Psychology	3	Core Skill	Theory
Curriculum Dev. in Sc. & Tech. Educ.	2	Core Skill	Theory
Educational Planning and Administration	3	Core Skill	Theory
Technical Writing	2	Generic Skill	Theory
Communication Skills	3	Generic Skill	Theory
Use of library	1	Generic Skill	Theory
Nigerian People and Culture	3	Personal Attribute	Theory

Source: Ismail and Mohammad (2015)

It could be seen from table 3 that most of these courses are theoretically-oriented and this why Yorke (2004) asserted that although the curricular process helps in facilitating the development of prerequisites appropriate to employment but does not

secure or guarantee it. Hence, it is inappropriate to assume that students are highly employable premised on the curricular provision alone: it may be a good harbinger but it is not an assurance of employability.

Adeyemo, Ogunleye, Oke and Adenles (2010) observations have suggested that employment opportunities for graduates are not mainly a function of the employment system and its requirement but of the quantitative structural skill linkages. It has been noted as well that in many countries, the views and the reputation of certain institutions and departments influence the employability of their students. Hence, some institutions of higher learning try to maintain higher competitive edge for their graduates by including different professional experiences during the course of study like learning visits, internships and so on. The expectations and decisions of employers varied and cannot easily be known because of the numerous factors that may influence the need for recruitment or the recruitment processes. Sometimes, some employers decisions are based on the reputation of institutions and departments.

Empirical Studies

Arikpo, Oden, Duramaku-Dim and Eloma (2009) carried out a study on determinants of the employability of tertiary institution graduates in South-south Nigeria. The study examined the forms of common entrepreneurial practices, curriculum outcomes, personality traits, gender role-stereotypes and their relation to unemployment and self-labour market performances of tertiary institution graduates in South-south Nigeria. The study sampled 361 graduates from universities, colleges of Agriculture, polytechnics, theological Seminaries and colleges of education in the study area. The

research instruments were the Graduate Self-Labour Market Performance Questionnaire (GSLMP), Personality Job Creation Behaviour Inventory (PJCBI), Gender Role Stereotype Job Creation Behaviour Inventory (GRJBI), C-O JOB Work Behaviour Inventory (COJBI) and Common Entrepreneurial Practice Attitude Scale (CEPAS). Four research questions were raised for the study: Data analysis was done using percentages, frequencies and multiple regressions. The study found that different labour market performance engagements existed among tertiary institution graduates, more graduates were engaged in government than private sector. The study concluded that all the aforementioned variables determined the employability of tertiary institution graduates in South-south Nigeria.

Similarly, Archibong, Oshiomu and Bassey (2010) investigated the quality of education delivery: Trainers perspectives in the universities of Calabar and Uyo, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design which sought lecturers perspectives on the adequacy of graduates and their preparation for employment. The study sample comprised 192 lecturers in 6 sampled faculties in the universities of Calabar and Uyo. One research question was raised to guide the study. A 20-item questionnaire was designed to seek information on 4 indices of the quality of programmes for graduate preparation for employment was utilised for data collection. The data collected was analysed through percentage.

The study revealed among others that 53.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that the curricula of study operated in their departments were adequate to prepare graduates for employment while 63.5% of them disagreed that ICT facilities were available for staff and students. The recommendations made were that with a view of

upgrading the curriculum to reflect the realities of the world of work, periodic review of the curriculum and tracking good feedback records of ex-students must be ensured in order to keep abreast with realities of the labour market.

Anho (2011) evaluated the quality and employability of graduates of Nigeria universities. The study focused on a comparative evaluation of the public and private sector employers perceptions on the employability of graduates of Nigeria universities. The study used the ex-post facto research design model concentrating on longitudinal data covering the period of 2000 to 2010. A research question was raised and one hypothesis was formulated. Samples were obtained from the major towns and cities in the South-south geo-political zone of Nigeria. The stratified purposive sampling technique was used; a total of 1,480 respondents who were senior Staff of various organisations, were selected for the study. The survey method was used involving structured questionnaire. The frequency and percentage were deployed in the analysis of data and used to answer the research question while the t-test statistics was used to analyse the hypothesis.

The study discovered that both the public and private sector employers perceived and rated the employability and quality of graduates of Nigeria Universities as ranging between average and high on the 20 indices of quality. The finding also showed that there were significant differences in the perception and rating of the quality and employability of the graduates by the public and private sectors.

Ediagbonya and Oyadongha (2013) surveyed on employability skills among post-graduate students of business education in Edo State. Human Capital Theory which was popularised by Schultz formed the theoretical framework for this study. The main

purpose of this work was to ascertain the mean ratings of employability skills possessed by Business Education graduates. Four research questions were raised and three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The case study research design was adopted for this study. The systematic random sampling technique was used in selecting 60 respondents from the population of 130. The questionnaire titled Employability of Business Education Graduates Questionnaire (EBEGQ) was used in eliciting information from the students. The researcher together with a research assistant administered the instrument. The mean, standard deviation, percentage, frequency and tables were used in analysing the data. One of the findings was that Business Education graduate employability skills was high. A major recommendation was made that business education teachers should be more active in imparting shorthand and typing skills in students.

Ikpesu (2014) carried out a study on entrepreneurial human capital development and economic future of Nigerian graduates. The study examined the adoption of entrepreneurship education as a multi-disciplinary approach in the curriculum of all Nigerian universities curriculum for developing the needed entrepreneurial human capital. A sample of 300 graduates currently undergoing their mandatory National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in Port Harcourt, Rivers State having entrepreneurship education background prior to graduation in their various universities and entrepreneurship training programme during orientation camp were selected. The instrument titled Entrepreneurial Human Capital and Graduate Economic Future Questionnaire (EHCGREFQ) was analysed with descriptive statistics.

The findings of the study revealed entrepreneurial human capital development have direct impact on the national economy. The study recommended that the future graduates should be taught essential employable skills and ownership mentality required in both the small and medium enterprises.

Ibidunni and Falola (2014) examined the effect of human resource waste on productivity in Nigeria. A descriptive research method was adopted for the study using two hundred and thirty-two (232) valid questionnaire copies which were administered in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. The simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample of two hundred and thirty-two (232) respondents. The data collected were analysed using percentage. The results showed that a strong relationship existed between human resource waste and productivity. The summary of the study indicated that there was a strong relationship between the tested dependent variable and independent construct. The study then recommended that young graduates should be encouraged by government, policy makers and employers of labour by creating an enabling environment that would make graduates to be job creators than being job seekers.

Conceptual Framework

This study focuses on labour market core skills requirements and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria. The conceptual framework of the study is presented as follows:

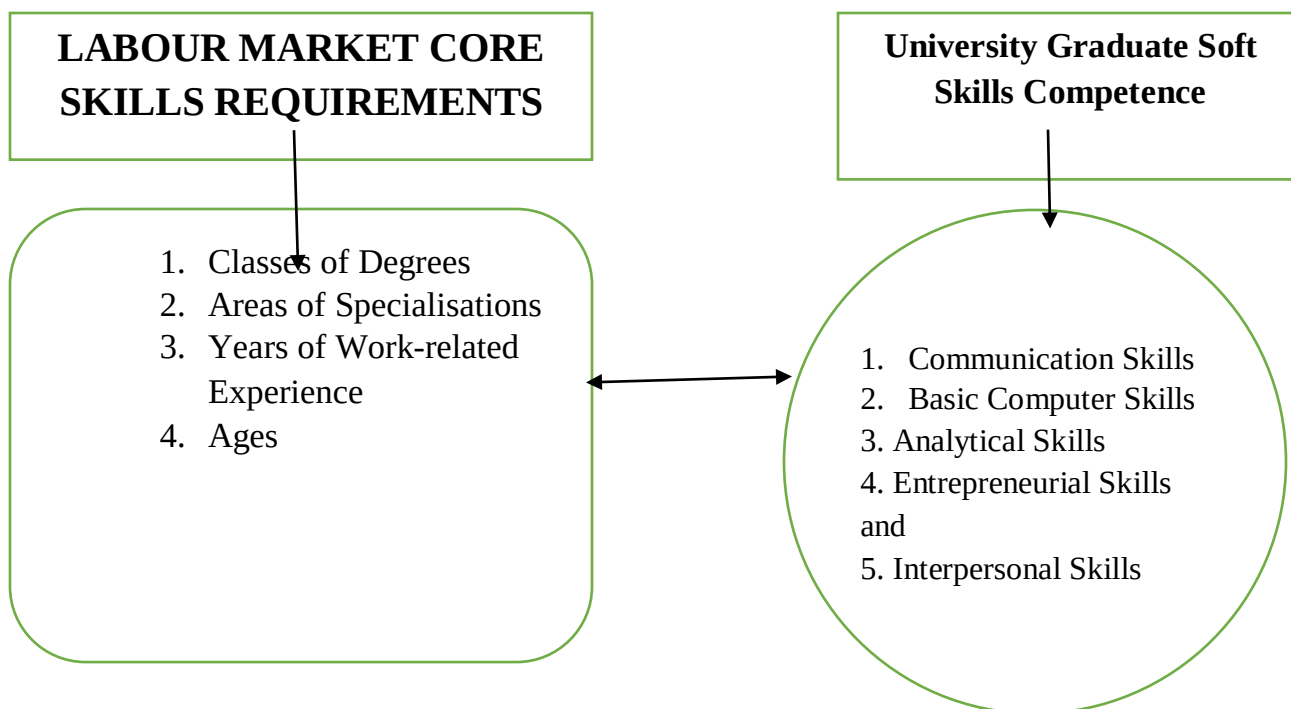


Figure 5: Conceptual Model on Labour Market Core Skills Requirements and University Graduate Soft Skills Competence

(Source: Researcher-designed, 2017)

This model revealed a holistic framework of the study which emphasises on the relationship between labour market core skills requirements and soft skills competence of the university graduates in North-west, Nigeria. The arrows connected to the boxes in the model show the relationship that exists between the labour market core skills requirements and the university graduate soft skills competence. The labour market core skills requirements were measured through classes of degrees, areas of specialisations, work-related experience and age. Also, the arrow pointed to soft skills which were communication, basic computer, analytical, entrepreneurial skill and interpersonal skills. The double arrow that connected the two boxes represents a relationship exists between

labour market core skills requirements and university graduate soft skills competence. This implies that both variables influence each other.

Based on these requirements and the soft skills competence level of graduates, employers of labour determine whether university graduates are employable or not. Inference could be made on labour market core skills requirements and university graduate soft skills competence not only in the North-west but also across all the other five geo-political zones in Nigeria.

Appraisal of the Literature Reviewed

This section focused on the appraisal of the literature reviewed in the study. The chapter reviewed relevant and related works and researches carried out by some eminent scholars and researchers on labour market core skills requirements and university graduate soft skills competence. The review was carried out under sub-headings which include theoretical framework, concept of labour demand, sources of labour demand, concept of employability, employability skills as well as relevant empirical studies. The relevant theory adopted in the study is human capital development theory. The theory is very important and relevant to the current situation of developing nations like Nigeria where demand for labour is low due to government policies and regulation, labour wage, level of the technological development among others. The theory pointed out that university graduates need to possess employability skills that will enable them to function effectively and efficiently in the world of work.

The literature reviewed suggested that labour market core skills requirements are important factors in determining entry into employment, its sustainability and progression. The level of demand in the macro economy has clear implications for the

ability of individuals to find employment. Also, it has been suggested that where a person lives has an impact on employability and this can be related to education and development as well as access to social networks. The level of business confidence and degree of certainty or uncertainty about the future influence whether employers seek to recruit in the external labour market. The lower the confidence and the greater the degree of uncertainty they (employers) feel and the less they are likely to advertise vacancies. Labour market core skills requirement at local, national and international levels may have impact on the level and nature of employability skills that young people require to gain employment.

The scholars, whose works were reviewed, defined employability differently but there is a general consensus among them that the concept employability is a wide range of attributes and competencies that enable a job seeker to gain and maintain employment such as, but not restricted to, communication skills, logical, analytical, problem-solving skills, personality, confidence, integrity, flexibility, adaptability, innovation, creativity and team spirit. This implies that employability is about gaining, sustaining and progressing in employment which encompasses more aspects of individual characteristics and qualities. A range of employability skills have been identified as qualifications, skills (of various types), values, characteristics and job-related competences. Although employability inventory would contribute to improvements in shared understanding and measurement of the concept, individual circumstances could constrain and facilitate employability.

Of great importance, also, is that employability is not an assurance of actual employment but a means of increasing the chances of becoming employed. This is

against the belief that credential, knowledge and social skills alone will guarantee a Moderate position in the labour market. With the restructuring of the nation to a knowledge-based economy, there has been a paradigm shift with more emphasis or demand for highly effective utilisation of employability skills. However, the review of empirical studies in this chapter shows that most of the researchers whose works were reviewed used descriptive research design in their studies. They also made use of questionnaires as their research instruments as well employed descriptive statistics such as percentage, mean, standard deviation among others. This therefore serves as a guide to this present study in selecting appropriate research design, instrument and statistical methods for the analysis of data.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses procedures used in carrying out this study. The chapter is discussed under the following sub-headings:

- a. Research Design
- b. Population, Sample and Sampling Techniques
- c. Instrumentation
- d. Procedure for Data Collection
- e. Data Analysis Techniques

Research Design

The research design for this study was a correlational study. Best and Kahn (2005) maintained that correlational research design is an approach that seeks to establish relationship between two or more complex variables on the basis of the predictions made. Baba (2005) explained that this type of research design is used where the researcher studies the subjects at one time or within a specified period of time. Therefore, the correlational research design was considered appropriate and adopted to describe the relationship between labour market core skills requirements and the university graduate soft skills competence as it existed in the North-west, Nigeria. Also, it allowed the researcher to make a careful collection of data in such a way that the information obtained from the representative sample of the target population was analysed for generalisation.

Population, Sample and Sampling Techniques

The population for this study comprised Top Management Staff (TMS) in various institutions and organisations in North-west, Nigeria. The target population for the study consisted of 1,212 top management staff in Education, Banking, Commerce, Manufacturing, Science and Technology industries in the North-west, Nigeria (Field work, 2016). The top management staff in this study were directors at States Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs), Teachers Service Commission (TESCOM), States Ministry of Education, registrars in tertiary institutions (universities, polytechnics and colleges of education) in the four selected states, bank managers, banks heads of departments (operation and marketing), heads of departments (administrative, human resource, production and marketing) in commerce and industry as well as science and technology organisations. The selection of these management staff was based on the reason that they are operational managers who evaluate and assess university graduates who work directly under them.

The four states selected for the study were Zamfara, Jigawa, Kaduna and Katsina States. These states were selected for the study in the North-west zone because they recorded highest rates of unemployment: Zamfara: 42.6%, Jigawa, 35.9%, Kaduna, 30.3% and Katsina, 28.1% (Ajaikaye, 2016).

The sample for the study comprised 306 top management staff members which were selected through the Research Advisors (2006) at 95% confidence level of 5.0% margin of error to determine the sample size of 306. Therefore, the sample for the study comprised 16 top management staff from SUBEB and 20 from TESCOM, 20 directors and 25 supervisors from the States ministry of education, 24 registrars from the 24

tertiary institutions in the selected states, 84 bank management staff across all the selected banks in the selected states, 64 top management staff from commerce and industry and 64 from different organisations in science and technology industry, totaling 306 participants for the study.

The sampling techniques used to select the sample for the study were the random and purposive sampling techniques. The simple random sampling technique was used (through balloting) to select seven banks out of 25 banks in the North-west, Nigeria. The technique was also used to select four different organisations out of nine in commerce and industry. Also, it was used to select four organisations out of eight in science and technology industry. It was also used in this study in order to give a Low and equal chance to various organisations to be selected for the study.

The purposive sampling technique was used to select three management staff members from the seven selected banks (these were bank managers, heads of operation and marketing). The purposive sampling technique was also used to select four heads of departments in commerce and industry (these were heads of administration, human resource, production and marketing). This sampling technique was also used to select four heads of departments in commerce and industry (these were heads of administration, human resource, production and marketing). Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample (directors and supervisors from States Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs), Teacher Service Commissions (TESCOM), States Ministry of Education (SMOEs) and all the registrars from the 24 tertiary institutions in the selected states of the study. Also, the purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants (top management staff members). This is because they are definite in number

and as part of their responsibility, they perform the functions assessment and evaluation of university graduates working in their various organisations and institutions. This is as presented in Table 4:

Table 4: Sample Distribution of Participants

Industries	Population	Sample	Sampling Techniques	
Banking	525	84	Purposive	Sampling
		TMS	Technique	
Commerce and Industries	224	64	Purposive	Sampling
		TMS	Technique	
Science and Technology	217	64	Purposive	Sampling
		TMS	Technique	
Education				
TESCOM	35	20	Purposive	Sampling
		TMS	Technique	
SUBEB	28	16	Purposive	Sampling
		TMS	Technique	
MOE				
Directors	45	9 TMS	Purposive	Sampling
Supervisors	104	25	Technique	
Tertiary	24	TMS	Purposive	Sampling
Institutions		24	Technique	
		TMS	Purposive	Sampling
			Technique	
TOTAL	1212	306		
		TMS		

Source: Fieldwork (2016)

Instrumentation

The instrument used for the study was a researcher-designed questionnaire titled Labour Market Core Skills Requirements and University Graduate Soft Skills Competence Questionnaire (LMCSRUGSSCQ). This comprised two sections A and B. Section A consisted of personal information of participants such as types of

organisations, location and position held. Section B consisted of thirty (30) items drawn from the research questions raised for the study.

In order to ensure the validity of the research instrument, copies of the draft of the instrument were given to five experts (the supervisor of the study, two experts in the Department of Educational Management and two experts from the field of Measurement and Evaluation, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria) for their comments on the face and content validity. Based on their comments and corrections, corrected copy was tested for reliability. The test re-test method of reliability was used. Copies of the questionnaire were administered in a State (Kebbi) that was not part of the sample of the study using 126 participants. The questionnaire was presented twice to the participants within an interval of four weeks. Responses from the two administrations of the questionnaire were analysed using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation statistic. The overall value of .89 coefficient was obtained. This indicated that the instrument is reliable.

Procedure for Data Collection

The copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researcher and three research assistants. The researcher administered the questionnaire in Zamfara State while the three research assistants covered the three other States (Kaduna, Jigawa and Katsina) after due approval had been sought and granted by the appropriate authorities of different organisations selected for the study.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected for this study were analysed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 21) using the descriptive and inferential statistic methods. The descriptive statistics of frequency count, tables, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to analyse demographic data and answer the research questions while inferential statistics of the Pearsons Product Moment Correlation was used to ascertain relationship between the independent variable and operational variables at 0.05 level of significance.

Decision Rule

Decision rule for items (six to ten) 6-10 in Section B of the instrument for this study is as follows:

Mean score from 4.1 – 5.0 was treated as Very High

Mean score from 3.1 – 4.0 was treated as High

Mean score from 2.1 – 3.0 was treated as Moderate

Mean score from 1.1 – 2.0 was treated as Low

Mean score from 0.1 – 1.0 was treated as Very Low.

Table 5: Interpretation of r-value

S/NO	r-value	Decision
1	$0.01 < r < 0.3$	Low Positive Correlation
2	$0.04 < r < 0.6$	Some Positive Correlation
3	$0.07 < r < 0.9$	High Positive Correlation
4	+1	Perfect Correlation
5	$-0.35 < r < 0$	Low Negative Correlation
6	$-0.6 < r < -0.4$	Some Negative Correlation
7	$-0.9 < r < -0.7$	High Negative Correlation
8	-1	Perfect Negative Correlation
9	0	No Correlation

Note: Negative correlation means inverse relationship and positive correlation means direct relationship. Source: Egbe, Odili and Ugbebor (2000)

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This study focused on labour market core skills requirements and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria. In this study, six research questions and five hypotheses were raised to guide the study. 318 copies of the questionnaire were administered, 311 were collected and 306 copies of the questionnaire (duly filled and completed) were analysed. This chapter therefore presents the analysis of demographic data of participants, answers to research questions and analysis of data gathered from the hypotheses generated. Descriptive analysis was used to analyse the research questions raised in the study, while the hypotheses formulated were tested using the Pearsons Product-moment Correlation Statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

Analysis of Demographic Data

The demographic data of the participants were analysed to explain the variations in types of organisations, locations and positions held by the participants in their various organisations. The demographic data of the participants were presented and analysed in Table 6.

Table 6:
Participants Demographic Data

S/No	Item	Value	Value Label	Freq.	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum. Percent
1.	Types of Organisation	1	Banking	84	26.3	27.5	27.5
		2	Education	94	29.5	30.7	58.2
		3	Commerce and Industry	64	20.1	20.9	79.1
		4	Science and Technology	64	20.1	20.9	100.0
			Total	306	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Location of Participants	1	Kaduna	79	24.8	25.8	25.8
		2	Katsina	77	24.1	25.2	51.0
		3	Zamfara	76	23.8	24.8	75.8
		4	Jigawa	74	24.2	24.2	100.0
			Total	306	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Positions held by participants	1	TMS	306	100.0	100.0	100.0
		2	MTS	-	-	-	-
		3	LTS	-	-	-	-
				Total	306	100.0	100.0

Source: Survey 2017

TMS* = Top Management Staff, MTS* = Middle Management Staff, LTS* = Lower Management Staff.

Table 6 revealed the distributions of participants by organisations, locations and positions held in their various organisations. The table indicated that 84 (26.3%) of the participants were from Banking industry, 94 (29.5%) from Education industry, 64 (20.1) were drawn from Commerce and Industry and 64 (20.1) from Science and Technology industry. The distribution of participants by location revealed that 79 (24.8%) were drawn from Kaduna State, 77 (24.1%) from Katsina State, 76 (23.8%) from Zamfara State and

74 (23.2) from Jigawa State. Also, as shown in the table, all the participants (306, 100%) that participated in this study were at the top management level in their various organisations.

Answering Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the classes of degrees required by employers of labour from university graduates in North-west, Nigeria?

Table 7:
Classes of Degrees Required by Employers of Labour from University Graduates in North-west, Nigeria

S/N	Classes of Degrees	Frequency of Participants Responses	Percentage
1.	1 st Class	94	30.7
2.	2 nd Class Upper	70	22.9
3.	2 nd Class Lower	53	17.3
4.	3 rd Class	48	15.7
5.	Pass	41	13.4
	Total	306	100%

Source: Survey 2017

Table 7 shows the classes of degrees required by employers of labour from university graduates in North-west, Nigeria as perceived by the participants. It was revealed from the table that 94 (30.7%) of the participants agreed that 1st class division is required and considered as number one of classes of degrees that determine the university graduate employability. 70 (22.9%) of the participants ranked 2nd class upper division as number two determinant of classes of degrees that are required in determining the university graduate employability. 53 (17.3%) of the participants and 48 (15.7%) of the participants ranked 2nd class lower division and 3rd class as the number three and number four classes of degrees required and considered by employers of labour. Pass was ranked

as the least and number five of the classes of degrees required from university graduates in North-west, Nigeria as indicated by 41 (13.4%) of the participants. This explained that the university graduates with 1st class are required and have higher considerations than university graduates with 2nd class upper division and 2nd class lower division while graduates with 3rd class and pass were least required.

Research Question 2: What are the areas of specialisations required by employers of labour from university graduates in North-west, Nigeria?

Table 8:

Areas of Specialisations Required by Employers of Labour from University Graduates in North-West, Nigeria

S/N	Areas of Specialisation	Frequency of Participants Responses	Percentage
1.	Science and Technology	112	36.6
2.	Education	89	29.1
3.	Social Sciences	63	20.6
4.	Art	42	13.7
	Total	306	100%

Source: Survey 2017

As shown in table 8, all the participants expressed that Science and Technology, Education, Social Sciences and Art are required by employers of labour as a part of the core skills needed in their various organisations. However, 112 (36.6%) of the participants perceived that Science and Technology graduates were highly required and followed by Education graduates 89 (29.1%). Also, 63 (20.6%) of the participants further indicated that Social Sciences and Art were respectively required as 42 (13.7%) of the participants expressed. This implied that the areas of specialisations required by

employers of labour in North-west, Nigeria were Science and Technology followed by Education, Social Sciences and Art respectively in North-west, Nigeria.

Research Question 3: What are the years of work-related experiences required by employers of labour from university graduates in North-west, Nigeria?

Table 9:
Years of Work-related Experiences Required by Employers of Labour from University Graduates in North-West, Nigeria

S/N	Work-related experiences	Frequency of Participants Responses	Percentage
1.	0-4 Years	91	29.7
2.	5-9 Years	116	37.9
3.	10-14 Years	67	21.9
4.	15 Years & above	32	10.5
	Total	306	100%

Source: Survey 2017

Table 9 revealed the years of work-related experiences required by employers of labour in North-west, Nigeria. The majority of the participants (116, 37.9%) indicated that graduates with 5-9 years of work-related experiences are required and firstly considered for employment followed by university graduates with 0-4 years of work-related experiences as expressed by 91 (29.7%) of the participants. Also, 67 (21.9%) of the participants agreed that graduates with 10-14 years and those with 15 years and above were required in some few cases. This implied that employers of labour required and preferred university graduates with 5-9 years of work-related experiences above others with 0-4 years, 10-14 years and 15 years and above.

Research Question 4: What are the ages required by employers of labour from university graduates in North-west, Nigeria?

Table 10: Ages Required by Employers of Labour from University Graduates in North-West, Nigeria

S/N	Ages	Frequency of Responses	Percentage
1.	20-25 Years	127	41.5
2.	26-30 Years	93	30.4
3.	31-35 Years	54	17.6
4.	36 Years & above	32	10.5
	Total	306	100%

Source: Survey 2017

As shown in Table 10, the majority of the participants 127 (41.5%) indicated that graduates within the ages of 20-25 years are required and considered first in term of employability, 93 (30.4%) of the participants indicated 26-30 years as a strong requirements of the university graduate employability. Furthermore, 54 (17.6%) of the participants indicated that graduates within the ages of 31-35 years are considered third and graduates who are 36 years and above are considered the least among others. This implied that university graduates in the age bracket of 20-25 years have better chances of employability than those within the age bracket of 26-30 years as perceived by employers of labour in North-west, Nigeria. Also, graduates within the age bracket of 31-35 are given better consideration in term of employability than those who aged 36 years and above.

Research Question 5: What is the competence level of university graduates communication skills in North-west, Nigeria?

Table 11:

The competence level of university graduates communication skills in North-west, Nigeria

S/N	Communication Skill	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low	Total	Mean Rating	Remarks
1.	Free flow of oral communication	19	42	51	74	120	306	2.24	Moderate
2.	Memo Writing	-	6	12	68	220	306	1.36	Low
3.	Report Writing	4	8	11	43	240	306	1.34	Low
4.	Minutes Taking	14	21	21	42	208	306	1.66	Low
5.	Listening Skill	15	13	186	52	40	306	2.71	Moderate
Grand mean = 1.86			Low						

Source: Survey 2017

As shown in table 11, the participants indicated that the competence levels of the university graduates were moderate in free flow of oral communication in English Language and in listening skill with the mean scores of 2.24 and 2.71 respectively. However, the participants rated the competence level of university graduate memo writing, report writing and minutes taking skills as low with the mean scores of 1.36, 1.34 and 1.66 respectively. The grand mean generated from the data presented was 1.86. This implied that the competence level of the university graduates English Language communication skills was low.

Research Question 6: What is the competence level of the university graduates basic computer skills in North-west, Nigeria?

Table 12:

The Competence Level of the University Graduates Basic Computer Skills in North-west, Nigeria

S/N	Basic Computer Skill	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low	Total	Mean Rating	Remarks
1.	Word Processing	17	24	180	34	51	306	2.74	Moderate
2.	Spread Sheet	11	19	50	22	204	306	1.73	Low
3.	Statistical Packages	20	27	34	32	193	306	1.85	Low
4.	Presentation	12	25	30	67	172	306	1.81	Low
5.	Internet Skill	24	40	140	40	62	306	2.75	Moderate
Grand mean = 2.18			Moderate						

Source: Survey 2017

As shown in Table 12, the participants indicated that the competence levels of the university graduates basic computer skills in North-west, Nigeria were moderate in word processing and internet skills with the mean scores of 2.74 and 2.75 respectively. However, the participants expressed that the competence levels of university graduates in spread sheet, statistical packages and presentation were low with the mean scores of 1.73, 1.85 and 1.81 respectively. The grand mean generated from the data presented was 2.18. This implied that the competence level of university graduates basic computer skills in North-west, Nigeria was moderate.

Research Question 7: What is the competence level of the university graduates analytical skills in North-west, Nigeria?

Table 13:

The Competence Level of the University Graduates Analytical Skills in North-west, Nigeria

S/N	Analytical Skill	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low	Total	Mean Rating	Remarks
1.	Problem handling skill	7	12	39	100	148	306	1.79	Low
2.	Data Analysis	9	14	16	142	125	306	1.82	Low
3.	Decision making skill	6	20	27	110	143	306	1.81	Low
4.	Creative thinking	11	17	30	103	145	306	1.84	Low
5.	Logical thinking	14	19	28	67	178	306	1.77	Low
Grand mean = 1.81			Low						

Source: Survey 2017

Table 13 revealed the mean ratings of the competence level of the university graduates analytical skills. The participants indicated that the competence level of the university graduate problem handling skill was low with the mean score of 1.79, while their data analysis skill competence level was also low with the mean score of 1.82. The table also revealed that the university graduates competence level in decision making, creative thinking and logical thinking skills were low with the mean scores of 1.81, 1.84 and 1.77 respectively. The grand mean of 1.81 was obtained implied that the competence level of the university graduate analytical skills in North-west, Nigeria was low.

Research Question 8: What is the competence level of the university graduates entrepreneurial skills in North-west, Nigeria?

Table 14:

The Competence Level of the University Graduates Entrepreneurial Skills in North-west, Nigeria

S/N	Entrepreneurial Skill	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low	Total	Mean Rating	Remarks
1.	Physical resources Management	13	11	33	58	191	306	1.68	Low
2.	Financial Management skill	9	12	15	81	189	306	1.59	Low
3.	Risk Management	6	13	30	85	172	306	1.68	Low
4.	Planning Skill	15	20	18	149	104	306	1.99	Low
5.	Innovative Skill	4	11	19	98	174	306	1.60	Low
Grand mean = 1.71		Low							

Source: Survey 2017

As shown in Table 15, the participants indicated that the competence levels of the university graduates in North-west, Nigeria were low in physical resources management and financial management skills with the mean scores of 1.68 and 1.59 respectively. Similarly, the participants expressed that the competence levels of the university graduate in risk management, planning and innovation skills were low with the mean scores of 1.68, 1.99 and 1.60 respectively. The grand mean generated from the data presented was 1.71. This implied that the competence level of university graduates entrepreneurial skills in North-west was low.

Research Question 9: What is the competence level of the university graduates interpersonal skills in North-west, Nigeria?

Table 15:

The Competence Level of the University Graduates Interpersonal Skills in North-west, Nigeria

S/N	Interpersonal Skill	Very High	High	Mode rate	Low	Ver y Low	Total	Mean Rating	Remarks
1.	Ability to interact with people	28	31	92	66	89	306	2.48	Moderate
2.	Participation as a team member	7	14	23	95	167	306	1.68	Low
3.	Work with colleagues	27	50	89	87	53	306	2.70	Moderate
4.	Level of Cooperation	8	19	25	116	138	306	1.83	Low
5.	Adherence to instruction	14	25	20	111	136	306	1.92	Low
Grand mean = 2.12		Moderate							

Source: Survey 2017

As revealed in Table 15, the participants indicated that the university graduates competence levels in North-west, Nigeria were moderate in the ability to interact with people and working with colleagues as indicated with the mean scores of 2.48 and 2.70 respectively. However, the participants expressed that the competence levels of the university graduate skills in participating as a team member, level of cooperation as well as adherence to instruction were low with the mean scores of 1.68, 1.83 and 1.92 respectively. The grand mean generated from the data presented was 2.12. This implied that the competence level of university graduates interpersonal skills was moderate in North-west, Nigeria.

Table 16:
Summary of the Competence Level of University Graduate Soft Skills in North-west, Nigeria

S/N	Soft Skills	No.	Mean Ratings	Remarks
1.	Communication Skills	306	1.86	Low
2.	Basic Computer Skills	306	2.18	Moderate
3.	Analytical Skills	306	1.81	Low
4.	Entrepreneurial Skills	306	1.71	Low
5.	Interpersonal Skills	306	2.12	Moderate
Grand mean score = 1.94			Low	

Source: Survey 2017

Table 16 presented the summary of the mean ratings of university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria. The table revealed that the competence levels of the university graduate basic computer and interpersonal skills were moderate with the mean scores of 2.18 and 2.12. However, the table further revealed that university graduate competence levels in communication, analytical and entrepreneurial skills were low with the mean scores of 1.86, 1.81 and 1.71 respectively. The grand mean of 1.94 as presented in the table indicated that the competence level of the university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria were low.

Hypotheses Testing

The following hypotheses raised for the study were analysed and presented as follows;

Main Hypothesis (Ho)

Ho: There is no significant relationship between labour market core skills requirements and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria.

Table 17:

Labour Market Core Skills Requirements and University Graduate Soft Skills Competence in North-west, Nigeria

Variables	N	X	SD	df	r-value	p-value	Remarks
Labour Market Core Skills Requirements	306	2.41	1.23				Ho rejected
				305	.127	.026	
University Graduate Soft Skills Competence	306	1.59	1.20				

From table 17, the mean for labour market core skills requirements were 2.41 and standard deviation was 1.23. Also, the mean for university graduate soft skills competence was 1.59 and the standard deviation was 1.20. The r-value was .127 and the p-value was .026. Thus, the p-value was less than the level of significance $p \leq 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there was no significant relationship between labour market core skills requirements and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria was rejected. This implied that there was a positive significant relationship between labour market core skills requirements and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria.

From Table 18, the mean for labour market core skills requirements was 2.28 and standard deviation was 1.19. Also, the mean for university graduate soft skills competence was 1.59 and the standard deviation was 1.20. The r-value was 0.140 while the p-value was 0.014. As shown in the Table, the p-value was less than the level of significance $p \leq 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there was no significant relationship between classes of degrees and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria was rejected. This implied that there was a significant relationship between classes of degrees and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria. This implied that there is a positive relationship between classes of degrees and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between areas of specialisations and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria.

From Table 20, the mean for areas of specialisations was 2.44 and standard deviation was 1.22. Also, the mean for university graduate soft skills competence was 1.59 and the standard deviation was 1.20. The r-value was 0.123 and the p-value was 0.032 at $p \leq 0.05$. This shows that the p-value (0.032) was less than the level of significance at $p \leq 0.05$. Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that there was no significant relationship between areas of specialisations and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria was rejected. Therefore, there was a significant relationship between areas of specialisations and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria.

This implied that there is a direct relationship between areas of specialisations and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between years of work-related experiences and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria.

Table 20:

Years of Work-related Experiences and University Graduate Soft Skills Competence

Variables	N	X	SD	df	r-value	p-value	Remarks
Work-related experiences	306	2.25	.98				Ho rejected
				305	.012	.037	
University Graduate Soft Skills Competence	306	1.59	1.20				

From Table 20, the mean for labour market core skills requirements was 2.25 and standard deviation was .98. Also, the mean for university graduate soft skills competence was 1.59 and the standard deviation was 1.20. The r-value was 0.012 and the p-value was 0.037 at $p \leq 0.05$. Since the p-value (0.037) was less than the stated level of significance at $p \leq 0.05$ for the study at 305 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that there was no significant relationship between years of work-related experiences and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria was rejected. Therefore, there was significant relationship between years of work-related experiences

and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria. This implied that there is a low relationship between work-related experiences and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria.

Ho4: There is no significant relationship between ages and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria.

Table 21:

Ages and University Graduate Soft Skills Competence in North-west, Nigeria

Variables	N	X	SD	df	r-value	p-value	Remarks
Ages	306	2.25	.98				Ho rejected
				305	.145	.011	
University Graduate Soft Skills Competence	306	1.59	1.20				

From Table 22, the mean for age demand was 1.79 and standard deviation was .98. Also, the mean for university graduate soft skills competence was 1.59 and the standard deviation was 1.20. The r-value was 0.145 while the p-value was 0.011 at $p \leq 0.05$ for 305 degree of freedom. Since the p-value (0.011) was less than the stated level of significance at $p \leq 0.05$ for the study at 305 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis which stated that there was no significant relationship between age demand and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria was rejected. Therefore, there was a significant relationship between age demand and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria. This implied that there is a low but positive

relationship between age demand and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria.

Therefore, the finding of this study revealed further that there was a significant relationship between labour market core skills requirements and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria at 0.05 level of significance ($r = 0.127$, $p = 0.26$). This means that labour market core skills requirements has a positive and direct influence on graduate soft skills and that is why employers of labour attach more importance to the skills. This finding supported Akinyemi, Ofem and Ikuenomore (2012) that apart from the qualifications that graduates possessed, there were other attributes which the employers emphasised as criteria for graduate employability. These attributes include verbal and written communication, analytical and investigative abilities. Others include entrepreneurship and managerial skills, team work, computer skills, time management, drive and flexibility. Based on this finding, labour market core skills requirements and graduate soft skills are very important in the recruitment, placement and training of graduates in the world of work.

i. Findings on Classes of Degrees and University Graduate Soft Skills Competence in North-west, Nigeria

The specific purpose one of this study was to examine the classes of degrees that determine university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria. The finding of this study revealed that the university graduates with 1st class were required first and considered to have had higher soft skills (such as communication, analytical, information and interpersonal skills) followed by university graduates with 2nd class upper division

and 2nd class lower division second and third respectively as well as 3rd class and pass were required and considered respectively.

Although, employers screen job applications on the basis of degree classifications as they (employers) expect graduates to have possessed high level of competence based on classes of degrees. The plausible reasons why employers of labour considered 1st class graduates soft skills to be higher and employ them before other classes of degrees was to increase the quality of their staff and productivity; because most of the 1st class graduates are more skillful, versatile and endowed with knowledge in information and communication as well-being analytical, critical and creative in carrying out tasks extraordinarily. This can then be interpreted that the higher the classes of degrees, the higher the soft skills competence and the lower the classes of degrees, the lower the soft skills competence.

However, in some cases, some employers use criteria other than the honours degree to assess applications with the believed that graduates with high level of soft skills competence may otherwise be missed because they have not attained high classes of degrees. This can also be interpreted that the lower the classes of degrees, the higher the soft skills competence and the higher the soft skills competence, the lower the classes of degree.

Coupled with the fact that 1st class graduates do not stay long on a particular job and some of them prefer consultancy services, therefore some employers prefer graduates with lower classes, like 2nd class lower, 3rd class and pass, for cheap wages, long retention (stay) at work and easy control.

The finding of this study in relation to classes of degrees further revealed that there was a significant relationship between classes of degrees and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria ($r = .140$, $p = .014$). This indicates that classes of degrees are critical to soft skills competence of graduates. Based on the findings of this study, in some cases, classes of degrees have a direct relationship on soft skills competence and in other cases, classes of degree may have an indirect relationship on soft skills competence.

ii. Findings on Areas of Specialisations and University Graduate Soft Skills Competence in North-west, Nigeria

The specific purpose two of this study sought to assess the areas of specialisations that determine university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria. The finding from this study discovered that the rate of university graduate soft skills competence in Science and Technology was higher, followed by Education, Social Sciences and Art respectively. The plausible reasons for this could be that more of science and technology courses are practical-oriented, science and technology graduates are more exposed to experimentation and analytical concepts than graduates from other disciplines. This finding supported the finding of Ajiboye, Oyebanji and Awoniyi (2013) that science-oriented faculties have higher levels of influence on employability. The report of Eurostat (2014) supported that in 2013, in the UK, among all higher education graduates, those who studied humanities, arts, languages or education had lower employment rates (84-88%) than those who studied medicine, subjects related to Medicine, Technology and Media/Information Studies (92-95%).

On the other hand, and in most cases, Art and Education graduates have higher level of competence in communication skills because most of their courses deal with affective and social domains needed for team work. This is why Adeyemo, Ogunleye, Oke and Adenle (2010) categorically expressed that although the principal road to robust and long-lasting development is inarguably through Science and Technology but the Arts and Humanities still play important role in national development. More so, graduates of Social Science have higher level of competence in entrepreneurial skills because they are more exposed to managerial and business experiences in their various courses of study.

The finding of this study further revealed that there was a significant relationship between areas of specialisations and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria ($r = .123$, $p = 0.33$). This implied that graduate soft skills competence, to some extent, are determined by the different curricular and co-curricular experiences they are exposed to. Therefore, areas of specialisations have a positive relationship with soft skills competence.

iii. Findings on Work-related Experiences and University Graduate Soft Skills Competence in North-west, Nigeria

The specific purpose three of this study was to identify work-related experiences required by employers of labour from university graduates in North-west, Nigeria. The finding of this study revealed that employers of labour mostly required and considered the university graduates with 5-9 years of work-related experiences with the perception that they (graduates) have considerable higher level of soft skills competence preferred. Although, this could be based on the preferences of employers of labour. The reasons could also be that the graduates within the 5-9 years of related-work experience know

more about the rudiments of the work and they can be easily controlled. Also, employers will spend less time and fund in training them on-the-job because over the period of years they have acquired relevant skills needed for the jobs. The finding of this study was in congruence with Jackson (2015) and Newton (2015) that work experience helps graduates to have a better understanding of the roles and expectations of their occupations and engaging with professional practitioners enhances their confidence. Therefore, World Conference on Higher Education (1998) concluded that a university degree certificate can open doors but without a rich learning experience underpinning the degree, it cannot change lives, release potential and transform societies.

The finding of this study also revealed that there was a significant relationship between years of work-related experiences and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria ($r = 0.12$, $p = 0.037$). This implied that years of related work experience determine soft skills competence and the more a graduate stay on a job the more he acquires relevant experiences on the job. This can be deduced that the higher the years of work-related experiences, the higher the level of soft skills competence. Therefore, work experience provides the opportunity for graduates to build on the knowledge acquired in the formal classroom situations and help in building up their employability skills. This was why Scrapetta, Sonnet, Livanos, Nunez, Riddell and Song (2012) reiterated that a lot of countries, such as Nigeria, have expanded recently to encourage the acquisition of work experience, as much as paid or unpaid internships which can help to increase the employability skills of young people.

iv. Findings on Ages and University Graduate Soft Skills Competence

The specific purpose four of this study sought to examine the ages that determine the university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria. The finding of the study revealed that, in term of core skills, university graduates in the age bracket of 20-25 years have better required and preferred than those within the age bracket of 26-30 years. Also, graduates within the age bracket of 31-35 are given better consideration in term of employability than those who are 35 years and above.

Possible reasons for this finding is that employers prefer graduates within the age bracket of 20-25 because they can accept to earn lower salaries than the more aged graduates, they have new ideas and skills that can be injected into the development of the organisations, they learn more quickly and have ability to adapt to changes. Also they can be developed to be part of succession planning.

One of the reasons to support this finding was also in the area of information and communication technology skills. The rapid growth in the use of information technology over the past two decades has led to substantial differences in age and exposure. This being the fact that young graduates generally develop and have more information technology skills than their older counterparts. Information technology training for older graduates is often provided on a need-to-know basis.

Furthermore, the finding of this study to purpose five revealed that there was a significant relationship between ages and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria ($r = .145$, $p = 0.11$). This shows that ages have direct relationship with soft skills competence. This finding is in line with Okwilagwe and Falaye (2010) and Ibok (2013) who discovered age difference is a serious factor in determining graduate employability skills. The study of Idaka and Uzoechi (2016) also supported this

finding that students within the age range of 21-23 years were better than those within 18-20 years and 20 and above in the skills of teamwork. Moreso, students within the age range of 24 and above were better than those within 20-23 years, who were in turn better than younger students aged 18 to 20 years.

i. **Findings on the Extent of Competence Level of the University Graduate Communication Skills in North-west, Nigeria**

The findings on the extent of the competence level of the university graduate communication skills in North-west, Nigeria revealed that the competence level of graduates English Language communication skills was low (mean = 1.86). This implied that graduate communication skills in English Language was not moderate enough as some of them (graduates) are still deficient in their communication skills especially oral and written skills. This finding is in line with Dabalen et al. (2000) who reported that the shortcomings of recent graduates were severe in oral and written communication and in applied technical skills. One of the possible reasons for this could be in the poor teaching and learning of the Use of English and Communication Skills in the university which has not been so much effective because the teaching of the course is theoretically-oriented with few number of periods in a congested learning environment. This made Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2005) to affirm that the content of these English courses are grossly inadequate for the students to acquire requisite skills in effective use of language for communication and for the give and take of social experience. This finding also supported Cabaces, Blanco, Cabanas, Casapao, De Guzman, De Villa, et al (2014) who

reported that much of the Nigerian university teaching is based on based on traditional pedagogy and conventional curricula with content and methods often outdated, not responsive to employers requirements and disconnected from the labour market.

ii. Findings on the Competence Level of the University Graduate Basic Computer Skills in North-west, Nigeria

The findings also revealed that the competence level of basic computer skills possessed by university graduates in North-west, Nigeria was moderate (mean = 2.18). This finding implied that graduates have effective display of basic computer skills in terms of Microsoft word, excel and presentation among others. This is based upon the realisation of the importance of information and communication technologies in the todays world of work. This finding corroborates with Brown, Hesketh and Williams (2003) that as a result of the new demand of the labour market, there has been a consistent global call for tertiary institutions to equip students with ICT skills by integrating the skills into their curriculum. This will enable students to adequately acquire and develop the employability skills needed throughout the course of their studies. Therefore, Lindsay (2002) asserted that regardless of their (graduates) areas of specialisations and the institutions from where they graduated, modern technology has affected their employability in the Nigerian labour market. The possession of basic computer and information skills give graduates added advantage in the world of work, help them stay competitive, manage information competently and use a range of methods to explore, develop and exchange information (Ahn, Annie & Kwon, 2012). This

confirmed that information and communication technology has a great influence on graduate employability.

iii. Findings on the Competence Level of the University Graduate Analytical Skills in North-west, Nigeria

Findings of this study further indicated that the competence level of analytical skills possessed by graduates in North-west was low (mean = 1.81). This means that, analytically, most graduates were deficient in decision making, logical and creative thinking. This finding supported the findings of Philips Consulting (2014) that graduates underestimated the importance of the ability to think critically and analytically as they saw analytical skills as unimportant skills. This therefore explains reasons why employers of labour expressed a high level of dissatisfaction with this skill along with graduates inability to work effectively on their own.

ix. Findings on the Competence Level of the University Graduate Entrepreneurial Skills in North-West, Nigeria

Findings from this study shows that the competence level of graduate entrepreneurial skills in North-west, Nigeria was low (mean = 1.71). This implied that most graduates did not possess requisite competence skills necessary for job creation and self-reliance. This finding supported Okebukola (2007) that most the Nigerian graduates were deficient in self-reliance and entrepreneurial skills while the type of education offered to them has constrained their entrepreneurial capability and their success in the

world of business. Uche, Nwabueche and Ememe (2009) supported that university graduates lack entrepreneurial skills because they were taught theoretical knowledge without entrepreneurial skills. Akpan and Etor (2013) in support of Okebukola (2007) and Uche et al. (2009) affirmed that most graduates from the universities only acquire academic knowledge without entrepreneurial skills which would have enabled them to create jobs for themselves, others and contribute effectively towards national economic development.

x. Findings on the Competence Level of the University Graduate Interpersonal Skills in North-West, Nigeria

The findings on the competence level of interpersonal skills possessed by graduates in North-west, Nigeria revealed that the interpersonal skills possessed by graduates were moderate (mean = 2.12). This finding shows that university graduates have moderate competence level and ability to interact with people and colleagues in getting things done. This finding supported McClellan (2001) that the university graduates must learn how to accept the people working in teams and working together on projects must adapt to each other in the workplace. Interpersonal skills enable graduates to work productively with people from different races, ages, cultures, genders and lifestyles (Jackson & Chapman, 2012). Personal attributes also help graduates to promote harmony and excellent working conditions (Aigbavboa & Aliu, 2017).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of the findings of this study, the conclusions and recommendations for improving labour market core skills requirements and university graduate soft skills competence in Nigeria.

Summary of Findings

The study was designed to investigate labour market core skills requirements and university graduate soft skills competence in the North-west, Nigeria. It was a correlational research in which labour market core skills requirements served as the predictor while university graduate soft skills competence was the dependent variable. The related literature was extensively reviewed. This facilitated the development of theoretical and conceptual frameworks, the university education and its mandate, employability skills and empirical studies on labour market core skills requirements and university graduate soft skills competence. From the nature of the problem and the basis of the information gathered in the literature reviewed, six (6) research questions were raised and five (5) hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

The study was carried out in North-west, Nigeria which comprises Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Jigawa and Zamfara States. The population for this study comprised all top management staff drawn from four industries (Education, Banking, Commerce and Industry as well as Science and Technology). Four states were purposively selected for the study. These were Zamfara, Jigawa, Kaduna and Katsina States. These states were purposively selected for the study in the North-west zone because they recorded the highest rates of unemployment - Zamfara, 42.6%, Jigawa,

35.9%, Kaduna, 30.3% and Katsina, 28.1% (Ajaikaye, 2016). The target population for the study consisted of 1,212 top management staff in Education, Banking, Commerce, Manufacturing, Science and Technology industries in the North-west, Nigeria (Field work, 2016). The sample for the study comprised 306 top management staff which were selected through the Research Advisors (2006) at 95% confidence level of 5.0% margin of error to determine the sample size of 306. The sample for the study comprised 306 top management staff which include 16 top management staff from SUBEB and 20 from TESCOM, 9 directors and 25 supervisors from the State ministries of education, 24 registrars from the 24 tertiary institutions in the selected states, 84 bank management staff across all the selected banks in the selected states, 64 top management staff from commerce and industry and 64 from different organisations in science and technology industry.

A set of researcher-designed questionnaire titled Labour Market Core Skills Requirements and University Graduate Soft Skills Competence Questionnaire (LMCSRUGSSCQ) was used for the data collection. This comprised two sections A and B. Section A comprised personal information of participants such as types of organisations, locations and positions held. Section B consisted of thirty (30) items drawn from the research questions raised for the study.

The data collected for this study was analysed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 21) using the descriptive and inferential statistic methods. The descriptive statistics of percentages, means and standard deviations were used to analyse demographic data of the participants and answer the research questions, while

inferential statistics of the Pearsons product-moment correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

The findings of the study are summarised that:

1. the labour market core skills required by employers of labour from university graduates in North-west, Nigeria were classes of degrees, areas of specialisations, years of related work experience and ages. Also, there was a significant relationship between labour market core skills requirements and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria ($r = 0.127$, $P = 0.26$);
2. classes of degrees were required and considered by employers. University graduates with 1st class division were first required while university graduates with 2nd class upper division and 2nd class lower division were considered second and third respectively. Graduates with 3rd class and pass were considered fourth and fifth for employment in terms of skills acquisition. This finding therefore was interpreted that, the higher the classes of degrees, the higher the competence level of graduate soft skills competence and the lower the classes of degrees, the lower the competence level of graduate soft skills. Although, this does not happen in all cases in North-west, Nigeria. The finding of this study was also interpreted that the lower the classes of degree, the higher the soft skills competence level and the higher the soft skills competence level, the lower the classes of degrees. Based on this, there was a significant relationship between classes of degrees and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria ($r = .140$, $p = .014$);
3. university graduates in Science and Technology were firstly required by employers in North-west, Nigeria. This is because they are more exposed to practical-oriented courses, more experimentation and analytical course contents, followed by Education, Social

Sciences and Art respectively. Also, there was a significant relationship between years of areas of specialisations and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria ($r = 0.12$, $p = 0.032$);

4. employers of labour required and preferred university graduates with 5-9 years of work-related experience (based on cost-benefit advantage) above others with 0-4 years 10-14 years and 15 years and above. As well, there was a significant relationship between years of work-related experiences and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west,

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the study concluded that both core and soft skills are fundamental requirements in meeting the present and future changing needs and demands of employers of labour. Therefore, there is the need for university graduate need to possess relevant both core and soft skills to increase their level of employability. In this present dispensation, employers attach more importance to soft skills competence more than the core skills. Despite this, classes of degrees, areas of specialisation, years of related work experiences and ages were among the basic requirements and considerations given to graduate employees before any other demands to determine their employability. The university graduate with 1st class division were required first by classes of degrees for employment. Those (university graduates) with 2nd class upper division and 2nd class lower division were also considered before others with 3rd class and pass.

It is concluded from this study that based on the need, the aspirations and the societal values in the North-west, Nigeria, the university graduate from Science and Technology are required and considered first, followed by Education, Social Sciences and Arts respectively. Also, the university graduates with 5-9 years of work-related

experiences were given considerations above others with 0-4 years, 10-14 years and 15 years and above. Similarly, the university graduates in the age bracket of 20-25 years seemed to have better chances of employability than those within the age bracket of 26-30 years. Also, those (graduates) within the age bracket of 31-35 were given better consideration in term of employability than those who aged 36 years and above.

Based on the findings of the study, it was evident to conclude that the competence levels of university graduate communication, entrepreneurial and analytical skills were low while their basic computer and interpersonal skills were rated as moderate. Therefore, the competence level of the university graduate soft skills competence was low. This implied that the university graduates in North-west did not possess adequately the required soft skills. However, labour market core skills requirements have a positive correlation with graduate employability skills in North-west, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions and conclusions from this study, the following recommendations are made that;

1. less emphasis should be placed on classes of degrees and more consideration should be given to the graduate soft skills competence. This would help in putting a balance between the theoretical or academic knowledge (what you know) and practical know-how (what you do);
2. in order to raise the university graduate soft skills competence higher, there is the need to review the curricular contents of every area of specialisations especially Social Sciences, Art and Humanities (just like Science and Technology) to be more activity-based on both core and soft skills required by employers of labour.

3. on years of work-related experiences, there should be a better partnership and collaboration between tertiary institutions and different organisations in providing different platforms (apart from the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme, SIWES) for students to acquire related experiences by inviting the industrialists as guest lecturers on practical-related courses also through part-time jobs, holiday jobs, apprenticeship training, Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS) among others. This will help graduates in possessing relevant skills over a period of time, equip those with few years of related-work experience, enhance graduate chances of employability and raise their soft skills competence level higher;
4. ages of university graduates should not be given much consideration in terms of core skills requirement rather emphasis should be placed on the soft skills competence possessed by graduates that will increase the performance and productivity of an organisation;
5. based on the low competence level of graduate soft skills in North-west, Nigeria especially in communication, entrepreneurial and analytical skills:
 - i. more time should be allocated to the teaching and learning of the Use of English and Communication Skills. The teaching and learning of this course should be in practical (interactive) sessions in a more conducive learning condition especially by grouping students into moderate learning size of 20 per group;
 - ii. more practical tasks on decision making, creative and logical thinking should be organised for undergraduate students periodically. It is hoped

that this will help in inculcating and developing in graduates the ability to be analytical in the world of work.

- iii. entrepreneurship skills among the Nigerian university graduates should be enhanced the more by making all entrepreneurial or vocational centers in all the Nigerian universities more viable through activity or practical-based teaching and learning.

Contributions to Knowledge

This study investigated labour market core skills requirements and university graduate soft skills competence in North-west, Nigeria. This study was carried out and contributed to the body of knowledge in Educational Management in the following ways:

1. a theoretical model on Labour Market Core Skills Requirements and employability skills was designed in this study. The model assumed that meeting the market demand of employers (core skills) by graduates and having related employability skills (soft skills) will lead to enhanced employability in the world of work;
2. a conceptual framework was presented in this study. The framework shows that there is a paradigm shift in today's labour market from just meeting the employers demand to possessing high level of relevant employability skills, to secure, maintain and sustain a job;
3. the study, in its findings, postulated that the higher the classes of degrees, the higher the employability skills and the lower the classes of degrees, the lower the employability skills. Also, in the other way round, the lower the classes of degree, the

higher the employability skills and the higher the employability skills, the lower the classes of degrees.

Limitations of the Study

1. This study was limited to only the North-west, Geo-political zone of Nigeria. Consequently, the findings are more generalisable to the zone.
2. Due to poor means of collecting labour market information and poor record keeping of labour statistics, quantitative aspect of labour market demand were not considered extensively in this study.
3. This study, among others, was also limited to few labour market core skills requirements indicators such as academic programmes, classes of degree, areas of specialisations, work related experiences and ages.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The following suggestions for further studies were found to be relevant.

1. This study was limited to one out of the six geo-political zones in Nigeria, therefore, this study can be replicated by future researchers in other geo-political zones of Nigeria to enhance the generalizability of the findings to more zones in the country.
2. This study considered the qualitative aspect of labour market demand due to poor record keeping of labour statistics. Therefore, future researchers could consider more studies on quantitative requirements of labour demand and supply across different industries in Nigeria to determine the number of employed and unemployed graduates across different industries in Nigeria and
3. This study was also limited to few labour market core skills requirements indicators such as classes of degree, areas of specialisations, work related experiences and ages.

Therefore, future researchers could conduct more studies to identify other components of core and soft skills across different fields or industries and employability performance.

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APPENDIX 1

Sample Size Table*

From [The Research Advisors](#)

Required Sample Size[†]

Population Size	Confidence = 95%				Confidence = 99%			
	Margin of Error				Margin of Error			
	5.0%	3.5%	2.5%	1.0%	5.0%	3.5%	2.5%	1.0%
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
20	19	20	20	20	19	20	20	20
30	28	29	29	30	29	29	30	30
50	44	47	48	50	47	48	49	50
75	63	69	72	74	67	71	73	75
100	80	89	94	99	87	93	96	99
150	108	126	137	148	122	135	142	149
200	132	160	177	196	154	174	186	198
250	152	190	215	244	182	211	229	246
300	169	217	251	291	207	246	270	295
400	196	265	318	384	250	309	348	391
500	217	306	377	475	285	365	421	485
600	234	340	432	565	315	416	490	579
700	248	370	481	653	341	462	554	672
800	260	396	526	739	363	503	615	763
1,000	278	440	606	906	399	575	727	943
1,200	291	474	674	1067	427	636	827	1119
1,500	306	515	759	1297	460	712	959	1376
2,000	322	563	869	1655	498	808	1141	1785
2,500	333	597	952	1984	524	879	1288	2173
3,500	346	641	1068	2565	558	977	1510	2890
5,000	357	678	1176	3288	586	1066	1734	3842
7,500	365	710	1275	4211	610	1147	1960	5165
10,000	370	727	1332	4899	622	1193	2098	6239
25,000	378	760	1448	6939	646	1285	2399	9972
50,000	381	772	1491	8056	655	1318	2520	12455
75,000	382	776	1506	8514	658	1330	2563	13583
100,000	383	778	1513	8762	659	1336	2585	14227
250,000	384	782	1527	9248	662	1347	2626	15555
500,000	384	783	1532	9423	663	1350	2640	16055
1,000,000	384	783	1534	9512	663	1352	2647	16317
2,500,000	384	784	1536	9567	663	1353	2651	16478
10,000,000	384	784	1536	9594	663	1354	2653	16560
100,000,000	384	784	1537	9603	663	1354	2654	16584
300,000,000	384	784	1537	9603	663	1354	2654	16586

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SECTION B

1. Please rank the following labour market core skills requirements for university graduate employability in your organisations (in the order of 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the boxes provided).
 - a. Classes of Degrees ()
 - b. Areas of Specialisations ()
 - c. Work Experience ()
 - d. Age ()

2. Please rank the following class of degrees for university graduate employability in your organisations (in the order of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 in the boxes provided).
 - a. 1st Class ()
 - b. 2nd Class Upper ()
 - c. 2nd Class Lower ()
 - d. 3rd Class ()
 - e. Pass ()

3. Please tick (✓) the area of specialisations of university graduates in terms of their employability in your organisations.
 - a. Arts ()
 - b. Education ()
 - c. Social Sciences ()
 - d. Science and Technology ()

4. Please tick (✓) the years of work experience considered for university graduate employability in your organisations.
 - a. 0 – 4 Years ()
 - b. 5 -9 Years ()
 - c. 10 Years and above ()

5. Please rank the age group of university graduate in terms of their employability in your organisations (in the order of 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the boxes provided).
 - a. 20 – 25 Years ()
 - b. 26 – 30 Years ()
 - c. 31 – 35 Years ()
 - d. 36 years & above ()

UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SOFT SKILLS COMPETENCE

Please indicate by ticking (✓) where appropriate to you

Please rate communication skill of graduates in your organisations

S/N	Communication Skill	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
1	Free flow of oral communication					
2	Memo writing					
3	Report writing					
4	Minutes taking					
5	Listening skill					

Please rate basic computer skill of graduates in your organisations

S/N	Basic Computer Skill	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
1	Word Processing					
2	Spread Sheet					
3	Statistical Packages					
4	Presentation					
5	Internet Skill					

Please rate analytical skill of graduates in your organisations

S/N	Analytical Skill	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
1	Problem Handling skill					
2	Data Analysis					
3	Decision Making skill					
4	Creative Thinking					
5	Logical Thinking					

Please rate entrepreneurial skill of graduates in your organisations

S/N	Entrepreneurial Skill	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
1	Physical Resources Management					
2	Financial Management Skill					
3	Risk Management					
4	Planning Skill					
5	Innovative skill					

Please rate Interpersonal skill of graduates in your organisations

S/N	Interpersonal Skill	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
1	Ability to interact with people					
2	Ability to participate as a team member					
3	Ability to work with colleagues					
4	Level of cooperation					
5	Ability to adhere to instruction					

APPENDIX III

LIST OF UNIVERSITIES IN THE SELECTED STATES OF NORTH-WEST, NIGERIA

1. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	Federal	Kaduna State
2. Nigerian Defence Academy , Kaduna	Federal	Kaduna State
3. Kaduna State University , Kaduna Kaduna State	State	Kaduna State
4. Federal University, Dutse	Federal	Jigawa State
5. Jigawa State University, Kazaure	State	Jigawa State
6. Federal University, Dutsin-ma	Federal	Katsina State
7. Umar Musa Yar Adua University Katsina	State	Katsina State
8. Al-Qalam University, Katsina	Private	Katsina State
9. Federal University Gusau , Zamfara State	Federal	Zamfara State

List of Polytechnics selected for the study in North-west, Nigeria

1. Jigawa State Polytechnic, Jigawa	State	Jigawa State
2. Kaduna Polytechnic	Federal	Kaduna State
3. Nigerian Coll. of Aviation Tech., Zaira	Federal	Kaduna State
4. Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria, Kaduna State	State	Kaduna state
5. Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic	State	Katsina State
6. Federal Polytechnic, Kaura-Namoda	Federal	Zamfara State
7. Abdu Gusau Polytechnic, Talata Mafara	State	Zamfara State

List of COEs selected for the study

1. Federal College of Education, Zaria	Federal	Kaduna State
2. JamaAtu College of Education (JACE), Kaduna	Private	Kaduna state
3. Kaduna State College of Education, Gidan-Waya, Kafancha, State		Kaduna State
4. Jigawa State College of Education, Gumel	State	Jigawa State
5. Federal College of Education, Katsina	Federal	Katsina State
6. Isa Kaita College of Education, Dutsin-ma	State	Katsina State
7. Federal College of Education (Technical), Gusau,	Federal	Zamfara State
8. Zamfara State College of Education, Maru,	State	Zamfara State.

Basic Education Commissions

1. Kaduna State Basic Education Commission, Kaduna State.
2. Jigawa State Basic Education Commission, Kaduna State
3. Katsina State Basic Education Commission, Kaduna State
4. Zamfara State Basic Education Commission, Kaduna State

State Ministries of Education

1. Kaduna State Ministry of Education, Kaduna State.
2. Jigawa State Ministry of Education, Jigawa State
3. Katsina State Ministry of Education, Katsina State
4. Zamfara State Ministry of Education, Zamfara State

Teachers Service Commissions

1. Teacher Service Commission, Kaduna State.
2. Teacher Service Commission, Jigawa State
3. Teacher Service Commission, Katsina State
4. Teacher Service Commission, Zamfara State

List of Commercial Banks Selected for the Study

- 1 [Access Bank Plc.](#)
- 2 [Diamond Bank Plc.](#)
- 3 [Ecobank Nigeria Plc.](#)
- 4 [Enterprise Bank](#)
- 5 [Fidelity Bank Plc.](#)
- 6 [FIRST BANK NIGERIA LIMITED](#)
- 7 [First City Monument Bank Plc.](#)
- 8 [Guaranty Trust Bank Plc.](#)
- 9 [Heritage Banking Company Ltd.](#)
- 10 [Key Stone Bank](#)
- 11 [MainStreet Bank](#)
- 12 [Skye Bank Plc.](#)
- 13 [Stanbic IBTC Bank Ltd.](#)
- 14 [Standard Chartered Bank Nigeria Ltd.](#)
- 15 [Sterling Bank Plc.](#)
- 16 [Union Bank of Nigeria Plc.](#)
- 17 [United Bank For Africa Plc.](#)
- 18 [Unity Bank Plc.](#)
- 19 [Wema Bank Plc.](#)
- 20 [Zenith Bank Plc.](#)

Categories of Commerce and Manufacturing Industries selected for the study

1. Apparel Manufacturing
2. [Bag Manufacturing](#)
3. Food and [Beverage Manufacturing](#) (PZ Cussons Nigeria PLC (PZ), Cadbury Nigeria PLC (CADBURY), Dangote Flour Mills PLC (DANGFLOU), Dangote Sugar Refinery PLC (DANGSUGA), Unilever Nigeria PLC (UNILEVER) and so on)
4. [Dairy Product](#)
5. [Foam Manufacturing](#)
6. [Furniture Manufacturing](#)
7. [Hand and Machine Tools](#)
8. [Industrial Supplies](#)
9. [Manufacturing Agents and Representatives](#)
10. [Textile Manufacturing](#)
11. [Bottle Manufacturing](#) (e.g. Nigerian Breweries PLC (NB), Premier Breweries PLC (PREMBREW), 7 UP Bottling Co PLC (7UP),

Categories of Science and Technology industries selected for the study

1. Chemical Industries (e.g. BOC Gases Nigeria PLC (BOCGAS), Nigeria Energy Sector Fund, Nigerian-German Chemicals PLC (NIG/GERM), Chemical and Allied Products PLC (CAP and so on)
2. [Computer Products](#) (Omatek Ventures PLC (OMATEK),
3. [Electrical Equipment](#) (Secure Electronic Technology PL,
4. [Personal Hygiene](#)
5. [Petroleum Product](#) (MRS Nigeria PLC (MRSOIL), Total Nigeria PLC (TOTAL), Mobil Nigeria PLC (MOBIL), Forte Oil PLC (FO) and so on).
6. [Pharmaceutical Products](#) (Neimeth International Pharmaceuticals PLC (NEIMETH), Pharma-Deko PLC (PHARMDEK) and so on)

APPENDIX IV
RESULTS FROM DATA ANALYSIS (SPSS VERSION 21)

Ho: Labour Market Core Skills Requirements and University Graduate Soft Skills Competence

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Labour Demand Core Skills Requirements	306	1.00	4.00	2.3987	1.23522
Soft Skills Competence	306	1.00	5.00	1.5850	1.20422
Valid N (listwise)	306				

Correlations

		Labour Demand Core Skills	Soft Skills Competence
Labour Demand Core Skills	Pearson Correlation	1	.127*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.026
Requirements	N	306	306
Soft Skills Competence	Pearson Correlation	.127*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026	
	N	306	306

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Ho₁: Classes of Degrees and University Graduate Soft Skills Competence

Descriptive Statistics						
		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Classes of Degrees		306	1.00	5.00	2.5327	1.47345
Soft Skills Competence		306	1.00	5.00	1.5850	1.20422
Valid N (listwise)		306				

Correlations				
			Classes of Degrees	of Soft Skills Competence
Classes of Degrees	Pearson Correlation		1	.140*
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.014
	N		306	306
Soft Skills Competence	Pearson Correlation		.140*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.014	
	N		306	306

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Ho₂: Areas of Specialisations and University Graduate Soft Skills Competence

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Areas of Specialisations	306	1.00	4.00	2.4444	1.22214
Soft Skills Competence	306	1.00	5.00	1.5850	1.20422
Valid N (listwise)	306				

Correlations

		Area of Specialisations	Soft Skills Competence
Area of Specialisations	Pearson Correlation	1	.123*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.032
	N	306	306
Soft Skills Competence	Pearson Correlation	.123*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.032	
	N	306	306

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Ho₃: Years of Work-related Experience and University Graduate Soft Skills Competence

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	306	1.00	4.00	2.2484	.98368
Soft Skills Competence	306	1.00	5.00	1.5850	1.20422
Valid N (listwise)	306				

Correlations			
		Experience	Soft Skills Competence
Experience	Pearson Correlation	1	.120*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.037
	N	306	306
Soft Skills Competence	Pearson Correlation	.120*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.037	
	N	306	306

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Ho₄: Age and University Graduate Soft Skills Competence

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	306	1.00	4.00	2.2484	.98368
Soft Skills Competence	306	1.00	5.00	1.5850	1.20422
Valid N (listwise)	306				

Correlations			
		Age	Soft Skills Competence
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	.145*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.011
	N	306	306
Soft Skills Competence	Pearson Correlation	.145*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	
	N	306	306

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, ILORIN, NIGERIA.

POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

Vice-Chancellor:

Prof. S. A. AbdulKareem

B.ChE (Detroit); Ph.D. (Louisville);
MNACh; MNSE; MACS; R.Eng (COREN)

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UIL/PGS/91/27

9th July, 2018

ADEDEJI, Israel Olusegun

Matric No.: 96/045866

Department of Educational Management,
University of Ilorin,
Ilorin.

Dear **Adedeji**,

Approval of Doctoral Research Protocol

I am pleased to inform you that the Board of Postgraduate School at the 268th meeting held on Wednesday 20th June, 2018 considered and approved your Doctoral Research Protocol titled:

Labour Market Core Skills Requirements and University Graduate Soft Skills Competence in North-west, Nigeria

You are to proceed with your Ph.D. programme accordingly.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Olu Olajugba

Deputy Registrar/Secretary

UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, ILORIN, NIGERIA

UNIVERSITY ETHICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Vice Chancellor: Prof. S.A. Abdulkareem
B.ChE, M.ChE, (Detroit); Ph.D. (Louisville),
MNAICH, MNSE, MACS, R.Eng., (COREN)
Registrar: Mr. E.D. Obafemi
B.A (Hons), Cert. Public Information (Kaduna),
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Our Ref: UJI/UERC/96/045866

Date: 9th November, 2017

Protocol Identification Code: UERC/EDU/223

UERC Approval Number: UERC/ASN/2017/1072

LABOUR MARKET CORE SKILLS REQUIREMENTS AND UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SOFT SKILLS COMPETENCE IN NORTH-WEST, NIGERIA

Name of applicant/Principal Investigator: ADEDEJI, Israel Olusegun
Address of Applicant: Department of Education Management
Faculty of Education,
University of Ilorin, Ilorin.
Type of Review: Full Committee Review
Date of Approval: 09/11/2017

Notice of Full Committee Approval

I am pleased to inform you that the research described in the submitted proposal has been reviewed by the University Ethical Review Committee (UERC) and given full Committee approval.

This approval dates from 09/11/2017 to 08/11/2020, and there should be no participant accrual or any activity related to this research to be conducted outside these dates.

You are requested to inform the committee at the commencement of the research to enable it appoints its representative who will ensure compliance with the approved protocol. If there is any delay in starting the research, please inform the UERC so that the dates of approval can be adjusted accordingly.

The UERC requires you to comply with all institutional guidelines and regulations and ensure that all adverse events are reported promptly to the UERC. No charges are allowed in the research without prior approval by the UERC. Please note that the UERC reserves the right to conduct monitoring/oversight visit to your research site without prior notification.

Thank You,

Ismaila Isah

For: University Ethical Review Committee



UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, ILORIN, NIGERIA

POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

Vice-Chancellor:

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UIL/PGS/27

10th May, 2018

ADEDEJI, Israel Olusegun

Matric No.: 96/045866

Department of Educational Management,
University of Ilorin,
Ilorin.

Dear **Adedeji**,

RE: APPLICATION FOR EXTENSION OF REGISTRATION

Please be informed that after due consideration of your request, executive approval has been granted for the extension of your registration for 2016/2017 academic session.

Also, note that extension of studies can only be granted twice on request.

Yours sincerely,

Olu Olajugba

Deputy Registrar/Secretary

