

RELEVANCE OF CURRICULUM AND CERTIFICATION IN WORKPLACE PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

The study examined relevance of curriculum and certification in workplace performance in FCT, Nigeria. 280 copies of Questionnaire titled, 'Relevance of Curriculum and Certification in Workplace Performance Questionnaire (RCCWPO),' were administered to the respondents. The research method used for this study was descriptive survey. Meanscore and Pearson Product Moment-Correlation were used for data analysis. Findings revealed that relevance of curriculum includes its usefulness to the need of the economy, the role of certification to workplace performance includes serving as evidence that could be presented for job placement, and it differentiates classes of degrees, curriculum can be improved periodically through interactions between institutions and professional organizations, and matching the content of the curriculum with the current times. The recommendations proposed are that policy experts should ensure that the curriculum of tertiary schools is monitored and ensure that the content is seen to be usefulness to the need of the economy, tertiary institutions should ensure that certification should confirm individual ability in line with the skills the certificate speculates, and curriculum should be reviewed periodically by overhauling, updating and injecting life into it, matching the content of the curriculum with the current times.

Key Words: Curriculum, certification, workplace performance.

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Introduction

The Nigerian educational sector is currently experiencing series of challenges at all level. These challenges make the fulfillment of national philosophy of education, as entrenched in the National Policy on Education a herculean task. FRN (2004:18) specifically states that secondary education shall offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles; provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grade; and inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence.

This means the government has a duty to regulate and approve curriculum to conform to the National Policy on Education so that students will not just pass through the school system for the sake of certification, but to prepare for the world of work in the future. The launch of the universal basic education was a welcome development, but there was the challenge of experience teachers to handle the various curriculums to prepare students for certification. According to Adenipekun (2006), the challenge of lack of teachers affects 85% of the states in Nigeria, including the Federal Capital Territory. This affects the goals of education to a large extent.

More disturbing is the fact that many graduates of the Nigerian tertiary education find it difficult to perform on the job. This according to Awanbor (2005) is due to the fact that many of such individuals lack sufficient level of innate motivation, and as such exhibit weak drive towards performance on the job at their workplaces. They also tend to manifest signs and symptoms of indifference and apathy towards work. This probably could be as a result of lack of adequate preparation during the build-up for certification. Similarly, Oniyama and Oniyama (2005) remark that schools with better organization and good academic environment will have better motivated teachers, curriculum content to prepare individuals so that they can turn out as individuals prepared for performance on the job at the workplace. To expatiate the importance of curriculum to the certification process, Aluede and Omoregie (2005) assert that teachers have to be well motivated so as to enhance their job performance in the class. This is to say when teachers are well motivated as drivers of the curriculum, they would do well on the job, and this will positively influence students' certification process, as well as reaching out to the outside world to learn about relevant knowledge to infuse into the curriculum due to the dynamic nature of the society.

As a matter of fact, the universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education hardly liaise with professional bodies that are in the field to know what is the new trend in the world of work (Atoyin & Osaikhuwuomwan, 2017). This development has affected most of the old curriculums in use in schools, which are no longer relevant in the contemporary society. For instance, in engineering, students are still taught engineering design in the old way, in Mathematics and Computer Science, students are still taught Beginner All-Purpose Symbolic Instructions Codes (BASIC), Formula Translation (FORTRAN), Common Business Ordinary Language (COBOL), which are no longer relevant in today's reality. Students that studied accounting have to prepare for recertification in order to be relevant as Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria's (ICAN) or Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN) professionals. The field of Law and Medicine are not faring better either in terms of relevance of curriculum to world of work (Atoyin & Osaikhuwuomwan, 2017). The truth remains that there is a great difference between what is being taught at school and what is expected at workplace.

Curriculum Relevance

The relevance of curriculum refers to the usefulness of the school curriculum to the need of the economy. Osezuah (2006) affirms this by stating that graduates are expected to put their skills into practice but this is not always the case. Most organizations end up retraining the graduates before they can perform. UNESCO (2006) emphasized that the effectiveness in job performance is based on mental ability and competence, which makes up the individual personality. The implication of this is that any graduate that fails to perform at the world of work is more or less a waste to the economy. Ajekigbe, Richard and Ajayi (2005) thus reveal that a United Nations report acknowledges that the quality of education in Nigeria has steadily worsened over the past 20 years, and this has affected the ability of graduates to perform on the job. This probably could be blamed on many factors. One of them is the inability of the curriculum to flow with the expectations at the workplace (Atoyin&Osaikhuwuomwan, 2017). This therefore is a challenge that every well-meaning stakeholder should assist in addressing so as to enthrone sanctity and quality into the kind of curriculum schools use in teaching students. Jacobs (2009) corroborates by stating that there is need to overhaul, update and inject life into the curriculum and dramatically alter the format of what schools look like, by matching the content of the curriculum with the current times.

Certification

Certificate remains a proof and the only source of confirmation that an individual possess certain skills from an institution of learning. Yusuf (2015) expresses the need to allow education institutions to plan their programmes in line with the needs of the economy. This is to say there should be more investment in programmes at the tertiary schools, which should be subject to the importance or relevance of such programmes to the economy. In the end, it will definitely have a great impact on the certification process. Certification equally differentiates the classes of degrees. As a matter of fact, Columbian University (2017) affirms that an academic certification is an official document provided by the University Registrar verifying dates of attendance, award of degree, and/or student status. It is typically requested for health insurance, visa, employment, or credit verification purposes. This means that certification is the only means to know individuals with first class, second class or third class degrees. Additionally, Rosalind and David (1998) explain that the Higher Education Council in Australia established interactions between universities and professional organizations. This resulted in their contribution in curriculum design, school content, the accreditation of graduates, and improvement certification process, as well as serving as the means of acknowledging the knowledge possess by individuals for job placement at work place. The result was overwhelming based on the discovered importance of the input of the professional bodies to curriculum design for the nation's universities.

Workplace Performance

Performance on the job at the workplace is one expectation employees have concerning graduates of tertiary institutions. That is the point whereby they (graduates) put in practice, the skills and competencies they acquire at school. Graham (2005) explains that job performance concerns the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are required to enable an individual to perform his or her duties appropriately. This could also be in terms of accomplishing given tasks or completing a job with positive results. The process is also the ability to combine skilfully the right behaviour towards the

achievement of the objectives set out in a workplace. Akinola (2004) observes that despite the fact that academic success is the main focus of educational institutions, the question remains how to translate such success to performance on the job. Afolabi and Imhonde (2003) corroborate the position of Akinola that what counts for the difference in performance of individuals is usually the level of innate and explicit motivation. King (2007) thus explains that schools with performance goals are more primarily concerned with how their graduates demonstrate their competence, and they are more likely to use social comparative standards to evaluate themselves against the performance of others engaged in the same tasks. However, performance orientation can be positive when it leads to a desire to out-perform others, or it can be negative when it leads to a desire to avoid failure and looking incompetent in front of others. The basic fact remains that performance at the workplace could emanate from the preparedness of individuals based on what they learnt from school and the certification process they went through.

Statement of Problem

There seems to be a disconnect between the curriculum students are exposed to in tertiary institutions and the expectations at the world of work (Atoyin&Osaikhuwuomwan, 2017). This is therefore not unconnected to the inability of graduates to perform on the job in line with the expectation of their certification at various workplaces. This is causing frustration as a result of the knowledge acquired, which sometimes becomes either irrelevant or obsolete at the world of work. This paper is therefore an attempt to examine the relevance of curriculum and certification in workplace performance in Federal Capital Territory.

Purpose of this Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relevance of curriculum and certification in workplace performance in Federal Capital Territory. Specifically, the objectives are to:

- i. establish the relevance of school curriculum to workplace performance;
- ii. examine role of certification to workplace performance; and
- iii. find out way of improving the curriculum periodically

Research Questions

The following research questions serve as guide to this study:

1. What is the relevance of school curriculum to workplace performance?
2. What is the role of certification to workplace performance?
3. How can the curriculum be improved periodically?

Hypothesis

The following research hypothesis serves as guide to this study:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the relevance of Curriculum and Workplace Performance

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between Certification and Workplace Performance

Methodology

The research design approach adopted in this study was a descriptive method. The sample was drawn from some selected professional and none professional graduates totaling twenty professions that are working in some organization in Abuja metropolis. The professions were Engineering, Land Surveys, Estate Management, Statistics, Public Administration, Mathematics, Computer science, Political science, Accounting, Economics, Biochemistry, Physics, Law, Business Management, Agricultural science, Education, Secretarial studies, Medicine, Medical Laboratory Science and Pharmacy. Fourteen respondents were purposively selected in each profession and were administered with questionnaires by the researcher in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria. This gave a sample size of 280 respondents. The professions cut across science and technology, social sciences, and Arts. The researchers developed a questionnaire instrument structured in Likert format called, ‘Relevance of Curriculum and Certification in Workplace Performance Questionnaire (RCCWPQ),’ for data collection. The RCCWPQ consists of two sections A and B. Section A solicits information on the personal data of teachers while section B contains a four point scale of fifteen (16) items. The questionnaire items were arranged in three sub-headings to seek information on the variables being studied. The instrument was given to two specialists in Educational Management for validation. Their corrections formed the basis of the final instrument used for the main study. To ensure content validity, a pilot test was carried out by administering the instrument to 50 respondents who did not participate in the main study. The test was calculated using the Lawshe Content Validity Index. CRV of 0.86 was obtained, which proves the validity of the instrument. Mean score, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation were used for data analysis. The mean rating of each questionnaire item was determined by scoring each response as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. Mean score of 2.5 and above implies agreement while a mean value less than 2.5 signifies disagreement. The chi-square results was interpreted in such a way that a null hypothesis was rejected when the p-value was less than 0.05 level of significance, and not rejected if the p-value was greater than 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The following research questions serve as guide to this study:

Research Question 1: What is the relevance of school curriculum to workplace performance?

Table 1: Relevance of School Curriculum to Workplace

Relevance of School Curriculum to Workplace	4	3	2	1	\bar{X}	Sd	Decision
1. The usefulness of the school curriculum to the need of the economy.	101	92	45	42	2.90	1.00	Agree
2. Graduates’ ability and expectation to put their skills into practice.	103	111	30	36	3.00	1.00	Agree
3. Mental ability and display of competence at the workplace.	108	98	34	40	2.98	1.01	Agree
4. Ability of the curriculum to flow with the expectations of the workplace.	103	95	44	38	2.94	1.01	Agree
					2.96	1.01	Accept

Table 1 shows that questionnaire items 1, 2, 3, and 4, with mean scores of 2.90, 3.00, 2.98, and 2.94 respectively show an agreement. In conclusion, the overall mean scores of 2.96 and standard deviation of 1.01 around the mean shows that the relevance of school curriculum to workplace performance includes its usefulness to the need of the economy, graduates' ability and expectation to put their skills into practice, mental ability and display of competence at the workplace and ability of the curriculum to flow with the expectations of the workplace.

Research Question 2: What is the role of certification to workplace performance?

Table 2: Role of Certification in Workplace

Role of Certification	4	3	2	1	\bar{X}	Sd	Decision
5. Serving as evidence that could be presented for job placement.	105	101	30	44	2.94	1.01	Agree
6. It is a source of confirmation that an individual possess certain skills.	97	103	32	50	2.87	1.01	Agree
7. It ascertains that an individual attend a certain institution of learning.	91	104	41	38	2.84	1.00	Agree
8. It is a means of differentiating the classes of degrees.	100	100	35	45	2.91	1.01	Agree
					2.89	1.01	Accept

Table 2 shows that questionnaire items 5, 6, 7, and 8, with mean scores of 2.94, 2.87, 2.84, and 2.91 respectively show an agreement. In conclusion, the overall mean scores of 2.89 and standard deviation of 1.01 around the mean shows that the role of certification to workplace performance includes serving as evidence that could be presented for job placement, it is a source of confirmation that an individual possess certain skills, it ascertains that an individual attend a certain institution of learning, and it is a means of differentiating the classes of degrees.

Research Question 3: How can the curriculum be improved periodically?

Table 3: Ways of Improving the Curriculum

Ways to Improve the Curriculum	4	3	2	1	\bar{X}	Sd	Decision
9. Interactions between institutions and professional organizations.	111	102	30	37	3.03	1.02	Agree
10. Enthroning sanctity and quality into curriculum schools use in teaching students periodically.	110	97	33	40	2.99	1.00	Agree
11. Overhauling, updating and injecting life into the curriculum.	100	99	38	43	2.91	1.00	Agree
12. Matching the content of the curriculum with the current times.	99	110	31	40	2.96	1.02	Agree
					2.97	1.01	Accept

Table 3 shows that questionnaire items 9, 10, 11, and 12, with mean scores of 3.03, 2.99, 2.91, and 2.96 respectively show an agreement. In conclusion, the overall mean scores of 2.97 and standard deviation of 1.01 around the mean shows that the curriculum can be improved periodically through interactions between institutions and professional organizations, enthrone sanctity and quality into curriculum schools use in teaching students periodically, overhauling, updating and injecting life into the curriculum, and matching the content of the curriculum with the current times.

Test of Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between the relevance of Curriculum and Workplace Performance.

Table 4: Relationship between Relevance of Curriculum and Workplace Performance

r	Sig. (2-tailed)	df	Decision
.386	.000	9	Significant

**(P < 0.05 level of significance)*

Table 4 shows the results of the test of significant relationship between the relevance of curriculum and workplace performance. The coefficient obtained was 0.386, with a p-value = 0, which is less than the critical value at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that a significant relationship exists between the relevance of curriculum and workplace performance.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between Certification and Workplace Performance

Table 5: Relationship between Certification and Workplace Performance

r	Sig. (2-tailed)	df	Decision
.399	.000	9	Significant

**(P < 0.05 level of significance)*

Table 5 shows the results of the test of significant relationship between certification and workplace performance. The coefficient obtained was 0.399, with a p-value = 0, which is less than the critical value at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that a significant relationship exists between certification and workplace performance.

Discussion

Analysis of the findings as reflected on table 1 indicates that the relevance of curriculum includes its usefulness to the need of the economy, graduates' ability and expectation to put their skills into practice, mental ability and display of competence and ability of the curriculum to flow with the expectations of the workplace. This finding agrees with the finding of the study of Osezuah (2000) affirms this by stating that graduates are expected to put their skills into practice. This is also in line with UNESCO (2005) emphasis that the effectiveness in job performance is based on mental ability and competence of individuals.

Analysis of the findings as reflected on table 2 indicates that The role of certification to workplace performance includes serving as evidence that could be presented for job placement, it confirms that an individual possess certain skills, it ascertains the institution of learning attended, and it differentiates classes of degrees. This finding agrees with the submission of Columbian University (2017), which affirms that an academic certification is an official document provided by the University Registrar verifying dates of attendance, award of degree, and/or student status. This is also in line with Yusuf (2015) expresses the need to allow education institutions to plan their programmes in line with the needs of the economy. This means certification will show how relevance a student will be to the economy of the nation.

Analysis of the findings as reflected on table 3 indicates that curriculum can be improved periodically through interactions between institutions and professional organizations, enthrone sanctity and quality into curriculum schools use in teaching students, overhauling, updating and injecting life into the curriculum, and matching the content of the curriculum with the current times. This finding agrees with Jacobs (2009) who states that there is need to overhaul, update and inject life into the curriculum. Also, Atoyinand Osaikhuwuomwan (2017) attest to the fact that the curriculum should be made to flow with the expectations at the workplace.

Analysis of the findings as reflected on table 4 indicates that a significant relationship exists between the relevance of curriculum and workplace performance. This reechoes the position of Osezuah (2000) regarding the expectation for graduates, as well as that of Graham (2005) who explains that job performance concerns the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are required to enable an individual to perform his or her duties appropriately

Analysis of the findings as reflected on table 5 indicates that a significant relationship exists between certification and workplace performance. This reaffirms the position of Yusuf (2015) regarding adequate planning of academic programmes and that of King (2007) who explains that schools with performance goals are more primarily concerned with how their graduates demonstrate their competence at the world of work.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study it was concluded that the relevance of curriculum includes its usefulness to the need of the economy, graduates' ability and expectation to put their skills into practice, display of competence and ability of what was learnt in the curriculum to flow with the expectations of the workplace. Based on the relevance, the role of certification to workplace performance includes serving as evidence that could be presented for job placement, confirms that an individual possess certain skills, ascertains the institution of learning attended, and differentiates classes of degrees possessed by graduates. It was also concluded that the curriculum can be improved periodically through interactions between institutions and professional organizations, enthrone sanctity and quality into curriculum schools use in teaching students, overhauling, updating and injecting life into the curriculum, and matching the content of the curriculum with the current times. This is to ensure a flow of what students learn in the curriculum to the world of work.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the recommendations proposed are that:-

- i. Policy experts should ensure that the curriculum of tertiary schools is monitored and ensure that the content is seen to be usefulness to the need of the economy, and graduates' ability and expectations should be tailored into practical display of their competencies, mental ability and skill preparedness for the expectations of the workplace.
- ii. The tertiary institutions should ensure that certification should not be for a mere formality but should confirm individual ability in line with the skills the certificate speculates as possessed by the individual holder of the certificate and the competency should show based on the classes of degrees.
- iii. Stakeholders should ensure that the curriculum is reviewed periodically by overhauling, updating and injecting life into it, matching the content of the curriculum with the current times and students should be encouraged to participate in intensive internship to learn the real skills from the field, so that such competence and ability could easily flow with the expectations of the workplace in the end.

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