

African Students' Capacity Building for Career Success

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Abstract

Youth unemployment has been a major concern for African governments in recent times. A factor that contributes to this is employers who have ridiculous hiring requirements that become an impediment for most applicants. Although the literature blames school leadership and the school environment as the main causes of graduate unemployment, there seems to be a paucity of literature on the actual causes of graduate unemployment and the reasons for their poor performance in the workforce. This study assesses the actual causes of graduate unemployment in Africa and suggests remedies to salvage the situation. It provides a content analysis of papers presented at conferences, magazines, books, reports, and existing literature on academic articles. This study discovered that graduates lack work experience, computer skills, soft skills, problem-solving skills, creativity, etc. and these are the key drivers of youth unemployment in Africa. The study recommends that graduates should undertake an internship or voluntary work to acquire work experience and learn soft skills such as courtesy, politeness, and good manners at the workplace. They should also learn how to use basic computer software packages, find mentors in the profession who will guide them on the job, pursue life-long learning education, have a back-up career, and learn presentation skills. These are the remedies that will prepare new graduates to find their dream job.

Keywords: Africa; capacity building; unemployment; expectation of employers; role of students; role of the school; benefits of capacity building

Introduction

Youth unemployment in Africa has been a major socioeconomic and political challenge in recent times, although there is high growth in the performances of industries in several African countries (Baah-Boateng 2016). Fox et al. (2020) support this point that youth employment has been a major interest of African governments, researchers, policymakers, and those who implement policies. This is because a college education does not equip graduates with the basic practical and technical skills required by employers (Wilkie 2019). Unfortunately, educational leaders and school environments are perceived to be the cause of graduate unemployment, because students are under their custody for their future development. However, this is not true because, as postulated by Akhmetshin et al. (2019), good students are required to build their knowledge and skills for their academic success and to obtain exceptional characteristics that will make them distinct from others.

There is competition in any organisation and employers desire to recruit employees with the abilities and skills to transform their organisation and make them at least one step ahead of their competitors. Unfortunately, many employers have recently expressed that fresh graduates possess book skills without real-life skills (Hanson 2020). Employers expect fresh graduates to “hit the ground running” when they are hired, but unfortunately fresh graduates are not equipped to meet their expectations, and for this reason finding the ideal candidate is increasingly difficult. Employers believe that providing good training will not correct bad selection and it will cause challenges in the future if they do not recruit the right candidate with the right capabilities. According to Wilkie (2019), there is increasing concern about the high rate of graduate unemployment on the one hand and the shortages of skills on the other hand. The major problem derailing fresh graduates from finding their dream job is the lack of additional skills and credentials on their curriculum vitae other than a mere degree.

It is pathetic to find that most global research trends attribute the pursuit of higher education, equipping school leaders with knowledge, studying outside the country, and improving the school environment as the catalysts for students’ capacity building. Although these measures have been stated by numerous scholars, their efficacy remains to be seen. They all seem to have neglected some career readiness indicators that are key to opening the doors of decent employment. This article seeks to investigate the root cause of youth unemployment in Africa. It intends to be a sobering call for drastic change by suggesting some holistic and comprehensive guidelines for students, because the existing literature only provides indicators of illusion.

The first part introduces the paper, explains the problem to be addressed, and emphasises the objectives of the study. The second section provides a review of the literature on youth unemployment rates in Africa, capacity building, the hindering factors to job acquisition, and the theoretical framework. The third section is a discussion of employers’ expectations, students’ role in capacity building, and the school’s role in students’ capacity building; it also provides a conceptual framework

and considers the benefits of capacity building to an organisation, what graduates need to do when they finally get a job, and concerns by some non-governmental organisations regarding unemployment. The final part provides recommendations and discusses the ripple effect of youth unemployment in Africa.

Literature Review

Students struggle at the eleventh hour of their job search because it becomes too late to maximise their opportunity on the job market. The appropriate time for students to prepare for their dream job is their first day on campus. The number of students who acquire jobs after completing school and the limited availability of jobs should keep students anxious to prepare themselves ahead of time. As they will be met with stiff competition and a limited number of jobs, we encourage students to be vigilant to leverage their college knowledge on what career best suits their personal mission, as career development is not static—it is long-term, full of possibility and should be seen not as a sprint but rather a marathon. The courses students pursue are deficient in skills, and students need to be aware of this to redirect their path. Early career exploration entails students habitually acquiring practical experience in addition to the oral tuition they receive to determine the skills they want to obtain. It is the experience outside the classroom that metamorphosises into future career success. It also enhances additional insight into the profession the student would like to enter in the future, builds a professional mindset and work ethics to be more confident and satisfied on the job in the future. This equally provides an opportunity for students to learn new skills that differ from what they acquire in school and to build networks for future jobs. This serves as a bridge between education and the world of work.

Unemployment in Africa

Aririah (2021) posits that the International Labour Organization (ILO) defines the unemployed as the portion of the labour force without work although they are seeking jobs, and includes individuals who have lost their jobs or left their job. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) require that by 2020 all countries will minimise the proportion of youth unemployment by promoting education, training, and job availability. The ILO (2020) postulates that decent employment is vital to enhancing sustainable income and helping eradicate poverty. However, in Africa this mission is a challenge, which makes it likely that Africa will not be able to achieve this goal (ILO 2020). This is because when the SDG target was made in 2015, the percentage of unemployed youth in Africa was 20.0% and this was projected to increase to 20.7 % in 2020, which does not show an impressive increase and requires more improvement. Also, at a recent meeting of the African Transformation Forum's Youth Employment and Skills Chapter most of the participants lamented graduate unemployment and the lack of jobs for the ever-increasing youth population (Boateng 2018). Recently, Nigerian and South African labour forces indicated high unemployment rates, which have implications for stability and social cohesion beyond the borders of these giant countries (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 2021). This finding

corroborates the finding of the ILO (2020) that in 2019 about 34 million people were unemployed in Africa, of which 12.2 million were predominantly youth. This shows an increase of 6.4 million compared to 2010 and represents an increase of about 1.5 in the youth population. This presents a true picture of youth unemployment with respect to decent jobs. Research has shown that the highest rates of youth unemployment in Africa are in the southern and northern reaches of the continent (see Figure 1 below).

According to Hirsch (2019), employers complain that the skills gap among college graduates is alarming. Employers complain that graduates are not ready to perform the required tasks in their organisations due to the skills gap between fresh graduates and the expectations of employers. An early realisation of this challenge presents an opportunity to reinvigorate structural transformation to guide the youth to initiate good measures to improve their job prospects.

The African continent has one of the largest youth populations in the world, with about 226 million between the ages 15 and 35, which is approximately 20% of the world's youth population. These youthful populations will be driving the African economy for transformation (Adesina in CNBC Africa 2018; Emejo 2021). As the world's economy gathers pace, African governments have realised that a society in which optimism prevails and talented citizens rise is a foundation for innovation and entrepreneurship (Henn and Robinson 2021). This has resulted in numerous educational interventions, such as the launch of the Joint Youth Employment Initiative for Africa, which is a combined effort by the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the International Labour Organization, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (AfDB 2018). However, these initiatives cannot be effective if the capacity of students is not built. The United Nations Development Group (2016) defines capacity building as the process by which individuals, organisations, and society create, strengthen, unleash, and maintain abilities, skills, resources, and processes required to survive in the dynamic world. According to the University of Washington (n.d.), most graduates hope to work after school, and preparation for job acquisition should begin long before the completion of their studies. According to them, this should occur throughout students' college studies because currently, the hope of acquiring a job after obtaining a college degree is a myth. Therefore, career-seeking strategies coupled with work experience are crucial to gain a competitive advantage in the job market.

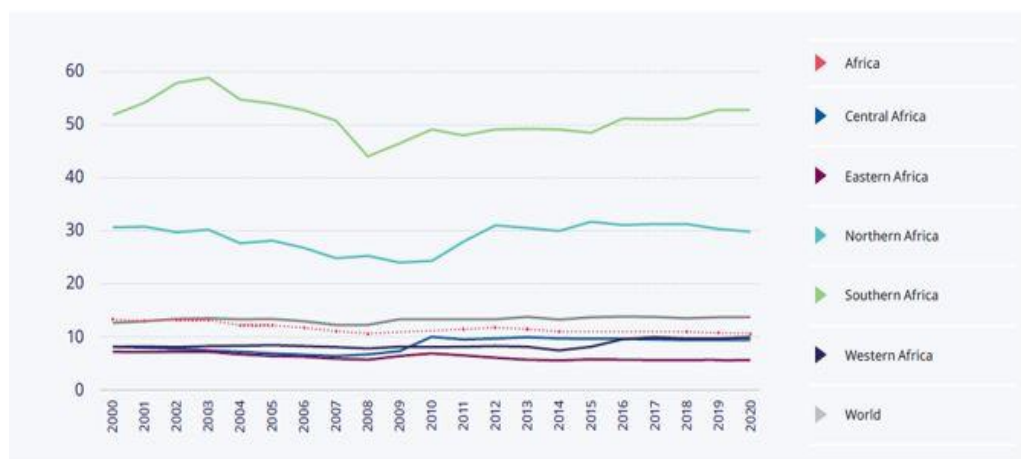


Figure 1: Youth unemployment rates, global and by African sub-region, 2000–20 (%)

Capacity Building

As desperate times require desperate measures, students’ capacity building has become crucial because they are the “fingerlings” who will occupy the organisations in a few years to come. According to Di Pierro (n.d.), capacity building is the process by which the behaviour and attitude of an individual is changed by developing skills and receiving knowledge. Capacity building can be done by a single entity, collectively as an organisation, or as a mandate by an institution. At the individual level, capacity building is termed human resource development (HRD), and it is key to the development of stakeholders such as competent managers and decision-makers (Alagaraja and Githens 2016). Building individuals’ capacity promotes leadership development, advocacy skills, public speaking, technical know-how, organisational skills, as well as personal and professional development (Wassem et al. 2019). When an individual equips herself well, it is a catalyst for growth to become versatile.

Students’ capacity building commences in school, and it is the amount of effort they exert on learning today that will yield a positive return on their desired career tomorrow. Capacity building never emerges in a vacuum; rather hard work and persistence bring its achievement. Owing to this, there is a collaborative role that needs to be performed by students and institutions.

Factors Hindering Job Acquisition

According to Aririah (2021), a graduate is a person who has successfully finished her first degree at a university or polytechnic. Many students obtain a degree each year and some students do not familiarise themselves with the way employers manoeuvre the recruitment process. Students fail to identify employers’ pet peeves and how to attract employers’ attention to help them optimise their application for jobs. Some factors that cause the higher cyclical volatility of youth unemployment stem from the fact that there

is competition in the job market and employers desire to see “career-relevant skills; social abilities such as communication, adaptability, creativity, ethical decision making, critical thinking, teamwork, problem identification, leadership skills; and habit of mind” (Fried 2020). In addition, other factors include a lack of work experience, poor time management, procrastination, a lack of confidence, a lack of networks, a lack of internships, and competency deficiencies. Mncayi (2021) states that although South African graduates may be mostly employed, their skills and jobs often do not match. Similarly, research conducted by Aririah (2021) on the causes of unemployment in Nigeria discovered that Nigerian graduates lack employable skills; the school curriculum does not put emphasis on entrepreneurship; training in school does not conform with what goes on in the society; graduates lack job experience; lecturers are outdated; students are apathetic to education and lack skilled knowledge.

Even though the unemployment rate is high, employers lament not getting the right skilled workers and in some cases need months to fill a single mid-level job. Vogel (2013) buttresses this point with research conducted on employers which discovered that two-thirds of manufacturers complain about not finding qualified job applicants. Other research on a renowned company also found complaints about not having qualified candidates, which impedes the growth of an organisation. It is the merging of modern technology, a competent workforce, distinct practices, and continuous learning that promote organisational growth.

Human Capital Theory

This study hinges on the human capital theory, which assumes that individuals’ and societies’ economic growth originates from investments in people (Gruzina, Firsova, and Strielkowski 2021). It is the in-depth knowledge workers have in their possession (innate and adapted) that improves productivity. According to Caire (1967), human capital development takes place in three ways, namely, formal schooling, on-the-job training, and off-the-job training.

Formal Schooling

Individuals dedicate time to obtain formal education for the acquisition of knowledge and skills that are needed to prepare them for the future workforce. The amount of knowledge and skills acquired determines how efficient and effective an employee can be in the job market.

On-the-Job Training

Employers screen employees to recruit the right candidates for the right job to facilitate easy understanding of the job and good performance, because good training will not make up for bad selection. Training enhances confidence on the job and boosts performance. Graduates seeking employment can enhance their training on the job by engaging in internships and voluntary work for experience.

Off-the-Job Training

This is where knowledge and skills for a job can be acquired to boost the effectiveness and efficiency of the employee. It is usually an institution that purposely trains workers on their job to be well equipped with the tools and techniques required for the job market. Students can obtain this training in their institutions and organisations through internships and voluntary jobs. Graduates should be interested in the additional skills and credentials that are needed to enrich their résumé to enable them to obtain their dream jobs in the future.

Employers' Expectations

Fried (2020) posits that most candidates lack the fundamentals to secure a decent job. This is exacerbated by economic concerns and global competition that require students to stand out from the crowd. Organisations are looking for prospective candidates who possess distinct qualities such as bringing new ideas to the organisation, being creative, and possessing good leadership skills.

Employers of today have ridiculous hiring requirements, which become an impediment for most applicants, making job searches stubbornly high and creating a yawning chasm between competent and incompetent applicants. Some of them do not provide on-the-job training but rather expect graduates to know everything as soon as they enter a position. They are choosy and desire to have employees who are versatile, confident, can work independently, and will be bold enough to roll up their sleeves to finish a task. They prefer to recruit employees with sophisticated skills that can transform their organisation and who can hit the ground running when hired because they are confronted with global competition. Employers of today are desperate for candidates who will be able to think outside the box to solve problems confronting the organisation and who will also suggest new ideas. Employers desire to recruit individuals who can transfer knowledge acquired in school to the organisation and who can bring the next great ideas to the organisation. They aim to find workers with a high level of workplace abilities that will enhance easy learning on the job. Their ultimate aim is to measure the skills prospective employees have to find the exceptional candidates suitable for hiring, because their competitive advantage hinges on the integration of effective and efficient workers and machines throughout the production cycle. Individual capacity building enhances organisational growth and development automatically to achieve productivity, and for this reason recruiting the right professionals is the first prerequisite to save the organisation from constraints.

No employers desire to recruit cookie-cutter graduates, and as such, there is a need for fresh graduates to polish themselves with that extra flair to stand out from their competition. It is obvious that recent technology has become more footloose and instantaneously available and the workplace has changed alongside it—and so must the knowledge, skills, and abilities of students. There is a saying that “sweeping change threatens to make yesterday’s managers obsolete, but an awareness of that change and

how to capitalise on it offer tomorrow's manager untold opportunity.” Therefore, graduates are required to prepare for transitioning into the job market and acclimatise to the employers' expectations. In this regard, obtaining a mere certificate without additional skills attached to it limits one's chances of securing a job.

Students Roles in Capacity Building

According to Kigotho (2019), research conducted by the African Development Bank discovered that diploma and degree holders trained at African universities lack mastery of abilities and skills required in the 21st century workforce. It is unfortunate that when employers are seriously hunting for highly skilled employees, our educational institutions are being unresponsive (Kokutse 2020). This finding has similarly been reported by USAID, which also stated that the education provided by institutions is not enough to equip students with the skills needed to compete in the recent job market. This implies that the nexus in terms of on students' capacity building between existing careers and institutions that provide training is broken. Nonetheless, there are some remedies to salvage this situation.

There is a need for students to brand themselves through their interactions with their colleagues. Good ethics and proper interactions with colleagues set the tone to prepare students for their next move in an organisation and also create the path to success in the future with an organisation. Candidates need to familiarise themselves with how to communicate and tolerate their colleagues as preparation for their future jobs, because it is a skill that can aid proper delivery of services in an organisation. So, whether verbal or non-verbal, it is vital that graduates equip themselves with strong communication skills as it is a vital tool for work.

Communication skills are required in an organisation to iron out conflicts, ask questions, and clarify technicalities of projects. Proper spelling and grammar checks need to be done to eliminate embarrassment in the organisation (Bansal 2017). Another technical ability that students need to learn is presentation skills, because it is the major means that organisations use to disclose their products and services to their customers. A poor presentation tends to kill a great idea. In addition, for students to have practical experience with the theories learned in school, there is a need for them to accept a couple of internships and voluntary jobs to obtain work experience upon graduation, because it is constant practise that makes perfect. About 91% of employers will prefer recruiting candidates with prior work experience on the job to avoid the cost of training new recruits. Students need to include all work experiences on their curriculum vitae, because every job done before gives experience and the more experience listed on the curriculum vitae, the higher the chances of being a memorable candidate. Lee and Qi (2021) state that the hope of securing the so-called “golden rice bowl” job that yields handsome remuneration, comprehensive social welfare, and advanced social status requires that you rely on fantastic contacts. This means that a student's ability to get a mentor allows them to advance in their career. The mentor gives resourceful directions to broaden their insight on the job and beyond and could possibly help mentees to find

their dream job. Again, students need to be confident but humble as every employer seeks graduates who will be confident in their skills, knowledge, and abilities, and who desire to learn and grow. An employer appreciates the humility of an employee to ask questions, accept his/her mistakes and learn from the mistakes. In addition, students need to browse the website of the targeted organisation to fish out information and seek a professional who will brief them about the expectations, strengths, and weaknesses of the organisation. This will enable students to have a fair idea about the minimum requirements and know the job descriptions to create a curriculum vitae that will coax the organisation to offer them a job. More importantly, a lot of emphasis needs to be placed on developing a new mindset. For example, focusing one's mind on continuous learning will broaden one's horizon on skills acquisition, as many skills eventually become obsolete after a few years (Asare and Essah 2021). Cultivating the mindset of learning will boost the mastering of skills and is a quality that will always be useful. Again, students need to plan a back-up career and need to possess many skills that will make them versatile and more attractive to their employers. This will help the employers not to spend money to outsource resource personnel to train new entrants in the organisation.

Another important factor is logical reasoning and critical thinking skills; both need to be strong because of their benefit to an organisation. According to employers, a typical employee can push a button, but recognising when a problem exists and how to troubleshoot it presents a challenge to them. Students' familiarity with multiple-choice questions causes their inability to make connections between things in the real workplace. Knowledge keeps increasing and technology keeps advancing; for these reasons, computers have come to stay. Most older workers in an organisation are scrambling to catch up with the fast-changing world of work. Youngsters who have equipped themselves with computer skills have an advantage over these older workers who are deficient in computer technology. Presently, all corporate institutions require some familiarity with basic computer skills and there is a need for youngsters to obtain good computer and software packages required to work in the corporate world. Social skills, customer services, and customer delight have recently become a new philosophy in every organisation and any job seeker who possesses common qualities of courtesy and self-control stands a high chance of obtaining a job. Employers cherish candidates with the ability to make judicious use of time. Employers appreciate employees who can juggle multiple tasks and projects ahead of deadlines. A lot of companies these days have disbanded working in silos. They want employees who can manage projects, deliver products on time, and work in teams with or without supervision. Society holds an individual with exceptional skills, abilities, and knowledge in high esteem. Knowledge gained today becomes obsolete and the individual becomes semi-literate. Therefore, it is prudent to cultivate the habit of continuous learning because knowledge fades over time as new things come into existence. Continuous learning helps an individual to keep abreast with new philosophies. This can be accomplished by motivating oneself to ensure that no year passes without upgrading oneself. As Rogers (2011) said, "it isn't enough to be on the right track. If you aren't moving you can still

get hit by the train.” Also, knowledge is like a garden: if it is not cultivated, it cannot be harvested. It is the snail that says: “Let me be where I am, I am content with it.” Students who can excel irrespective of the barriers confronting them stand the chance of avoiding becoming “insulated” or “isolated” in the job market (Harsh and Mallory 2013). The student who does not want to be insulated prepares physically, mentally, and emotionally as this serves as a buffer to the challenging environment. The final challenge is a major canker for most students and they need to take the initiative of breaking that hardest habit, which is procrastination (Smith n.d.). As Young (n.d.) posited, “procrastination is the thief of time.”

The School’s Role in Students’ Capacity Building

Education is universally perceived as the cornerstone for the acquisition of knowledge and technical know-how to work in the corporate world. Building human resources is known to be the required tool in alleviating the challenges confronting the corporate world. The objective surrounding professional development is to equip an individual with skills needed to perform a job. However, during the transition from being a student to an employee one is confronted with highly complex, numerous, and dynamic challenges. Fried (2020) posits that a recent article on students’ capacity building stated that it is the primary responsibility of the school. This requires a restructuring in our educational institutions, which usually ignore this vital challenge, namely, how to equip today’s college students with knowledge, skills, and abilities to adequately prepare them for a successful job.

One may ask: In what ways can educators impart the knowledge needed for a bright future? How are educators going to help students transform from their role as passive acquirers of knowledge into knowledge builders who can formulate solutions to solve daunting present problems? The root of success is numerous and there are some pedagogical methods to support students to be reasonable, thoughtful, innovative and motivated to withstand the test of time.

Institutions can help students build their capacity by initiating programmes that will educate them on their ideal professions and enable them to make appropriate career choices. This will also help students to unearth their innate abilities to pave the way to secure their future (Reay, David, and Ball 2005). Some programmes that can be initiated by schools are conferences, seminars, workshops, study tours, participatory research, and mentoring. Co-curricular activities such as outdoor games are one mode by which students can familiarise themselves with basic skills. There can also be active student organisations, which are a fruitful venue where students can obtain practical skills and build a peer network. Engagement in peer networks enables students to have emotional support and intimate counsel that are vital to fostering developmental gains and academic achievements (Stanton-Salazar and Spina 2005). There can be student exchange programmes that give broad benefits and outcomes as a result of changes in academic environments and settings as well as students’ personal life, e.g., socialising

and familiarising themselves with global issues to build their self-confidence and raise their self-esteem.

Conceptual Framework

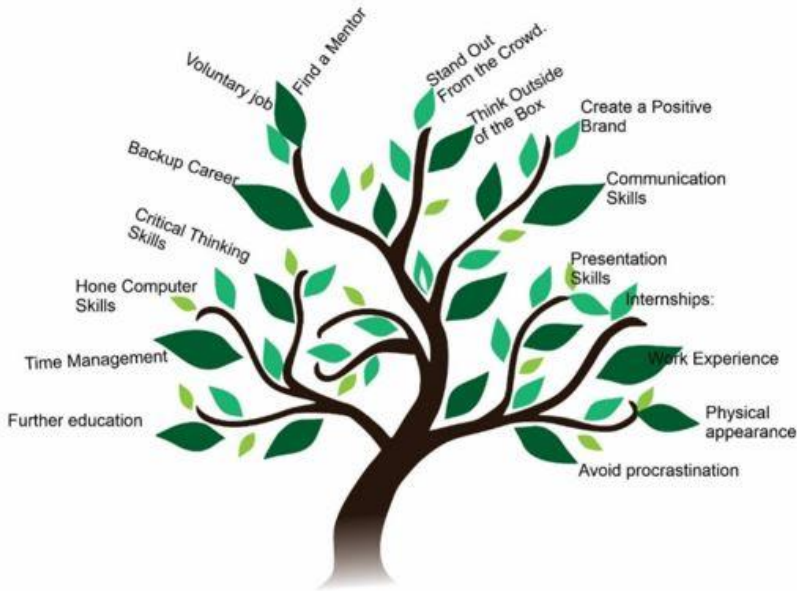


Figure 2: Students’ role in capacity building

Benefits of Students’ Capacity Building to the Organisation

There is a global concern about the advancement of the labour market which places highly skilled and strongly motivated employees in stiff competition with each other. There is evidence from numerous commercial studies suggesting a decline in the enthusiasm employees display towards performing their job. The decline in employees’ commitment to their job gives a further task to the human resource department and dwindles the productivity of the company. For an organisation to possess a competitive advantage, increase productivity, increase financial performance, and continue to remain in business, employees’ engagement is a major factor (ADR Times 2021). The services of employees are needed for a company’s profitability, and stakeholders of companies need to exert much effort to recruit employees. Stakeholders’ ability to integrate and formulate good relationships is vital to organisational success (Seid and Hussien 2018).

Students’ capacity building creates the energies organisations need to compete in the global economy for survival and also to be at least one step ahead of their competitors. The reputation of an organisation is enhanced when the workers perform tasks diligently and observe due diligence to increase work output. The ability of an employee to work independently and have a sense of ownership determines his//her level of capacity

building, which is crucial in the development of an organisation. The organisation will not spend money to outsource resource personnel to train the staff and this will minimise employee turnover in the organisation (University of Memphis 2019). Employee capacity building boosts the research standard of the organisation, increases the economic state and enhances the development of an organisation (Seva Canada 2016). Individual capacity building enhances an employee's level of understanding and broadens his/her scope of access to information, skills, and training to perform effectively (OECD 2020). The OECD (2021) opines that capacity building enhances the transition from being a graduate to an employee and puts the youth on the right track to find their dream jobs.

After Job Acquisition

According to Tonuchi and Onyebuchi (2019), the rising complexities with regard to doing business in the ever-changing business environment are due to organisations being confronted with multiple pressures and numerous challenges. Organisations are often confronted with increasing turbulence and uncertainties, which make it difficult to foresee the future. Any organisation that is particular about its vision will persistently research reliable strategies to pilot it through the murky waters and offer it a global competitive advantage. Stakeholders of organisations have the mandate to effectively comply with these challenges for the continuous existence of their organisation and to accomplish its mission. These successes can be accomplished with support from resource personnel such as professional experts or experienced individuals to enhance employees' abilities to drive the organisation's vision, mission, and objectives. Effective organisations emphasise employees' involvement in the achievement of their mission. Nwaeke and Obiekwe (2017) opine that recognition of competent and efficient employees is vital for the existence and success of an organisation because they are perceived as the lifeblood and engine that facilitate development and productivity in the organisation.

There is a need for new recruits to show the employer how hungry they are to obtain the job by taking the time to learn while in their new role and asking for more work. There is also a need for the new recruit to make him/herself available for projects. It is better for you to be resisted, as it shows how committed you are and your willingness to go the extra mile for your new organisation. Have courage and enthusiasm to ask questions because it paves the way for opportunities such as adding value with the aid of curiosity. It is prudent for new recruits to act as new staff and ask a lot of questions to soak up knowledge like a sponge when they finally find employment (Hanson 2020).

Concerns

European Union Support for Capacity Building in Higher Education

According to Jongsma (2016), the European Union (EU) established the Erasmus Project 30 years ago and it was relaunched in 2014 in support of modernising policies

in academic institutions. This system is meant to equip millions of students across nations. Their programme focuses on redesigning the school curriculum, providing services in support of students to reduce the gap between students and the world of work, and enhancing internationalisation. The project bestows scholarships for master's degrees studies across the world and has created room to accept ideas from all nations that will improve education systems to do their best. According to the EU, improving the capacity of higher institutions to equip students with resources that are aligned with the demands of the labour market and society is vital. Early preparation of students' resources will help them combat challenges in the search for jobs. The EU gives financial aid to students' capacity building programmes in higher institutions to eliminate difficulties students encounter while searching for jobs. The EU targets stakeholders of institutions because their integration enhances the bottom-up approach required to change institutions. They desire that institutions put in their best to nurture their students for a brighter future. There are numerous services and strategies available for use to enhance students' capacity building. The experience from this programme revealed that there are different categories of students and they need guidance on how to choose career courses and lobby prospective employers. The development of students' support services is a new phenomenon in transitional countries, even in the EU, and there is no disputing that developed countries still have work to do in this domain. Another discovery made by this programme is that universities continue to remain a bastion of fundamental research instead of being an engine for innovation, massive growth, and employability. Furthermore, merging the industry and students for innovation is another task that needs to be adopted by institutions to equip students with learning skills for career success.

European Commission Support for Capacity Building

Lee and Kuzhabekova (2019) state that the youth unemployment rate is super-cyclical and fluctuates largely with respect to the adult unemployment rate. The unemployment rate among the youth has become a global challenge, causing a decline in income and increasing poverty and social vices. This problem has been debated by many policy and business panels and in the mass media. The EU recently launched a programme dubbed the Youth Opportunities Initiative to aid unemployed youth. Their goal is to inspire the youth to undertake entrepreneurship and to find jobs.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This paper explained the need for students to build their capacity to enable them to have a competitive advantage in the competitive job market. It indicated that both students and educational institutions have a collaborative role to play in enhancing knowledge acquisition and skills development. At the student level, the article suggested that students undertake an internship and voluntary work to acquire work experience, improve their communication skills, acquire common courtesy, and learn how to interact with others. In addition, it is important to be familiar with software packages such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint to boost one's ability to work in an organisation.

Furthermore, students need to learn presentation skills and find a mentor in an organisation who will be the student's role model. Moreover, it is prudent to acquire multiple qualifications to be versatile in the workplace. Lifelong learning helps one to keep abreast of new knowledge and technology. Finally, proper time management is important to avoid procrastination. At the school level, the institution needs to organise programmes such as seminars, workshops, study tours, and participatory research to expose students to peer networks, exhibit their innate abilities, and build their confidence level.

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