



Global Advanced Research Journal of Arts and Humanities (GARJAH) Vol. 2(4) pp. 079-083, September 2013
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Full Length Research Paper

Employability of graduates of private tertiary institutions into Nigerian public services, perception of Nigerian parents in Ekiti state

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Accepted August 27, 2013

This study investigated the perception of Nigerian parents in Ekiti state towards the employability of their wards in private tertiary institutions into the public service after graduation. Multi stage sampling technique was used to select the sample of 250 respondents for the study. A self designed questionnaire titled Private Tertiary Institutions and Employment (PTIE) was used as an instrument in gathering the data used for the study. The face and content validities of the instrument were ensured while the reliability was ascertained at $r=87.2$, using test re test method. Frequency counts and percentages were used in answering the research question raised while t- test statistics were used in testing the three hypotheses formulated. It was revealed in the study that parents in Ekiti state had negative perceptions towards the employability of their wards into the public services after graduation. It was also revealed that the respondents' sex, employment type and the respondents educational background did not significantly influence the respondents' perceptions towards the employability of the graduates from private tertiary institutions. Appropriate recommendations were made.

Keywords: Private, Graduates, Employment, Public Service.

INTRODUCTION

Education in Nigeria could be dated back to 13th century. It started as an indigenous education type which was in practice before the introduction of Muslim and Western Education between 1349 and 1385. Indigenously, Nigerians our forefathers in Nigeria were trained towards being independent, upright and responsible in behaviour within and outside their immediate communities. They were taught in the intellectual skills that enabled them to apply their initiatives in solving problems whenever the need arose. Our ancient parents were given all it takes to be ensured of being emotionally and physically balanced. The most important of it all was the fact that Nigerian indigenous education was meant to produce individuals

that would be bold, courageous and at ease in promoting and propagating the cultural heritage of the traditional setting (Aniser et al., 2007)

All the vitalities mentioned above were achieved through direct teaching, observation, rote learning, the use of proverb and laying of emphasis on taboos (Frederick, 2001). Historically, in an attempt to hijack Nigerian economic and educational affairs, the Portuguese merchants penetrated Nigeria through the Gulf of Guinea in 1472, settled in Lagos and started their buying and selling amongst the traditional Nigerians. The difficulty in free flow of the business due to language barrier called for immediate rescue and hence the need

for Nigerians to learn reading and writing. This marked the beginning of a change in Nigerian educational system. The efforts of the Nigerian Settlers in Sierra Leone in the establishment of colony in Nigeria as at 1941 was the last straw that broke the camel's back in the up turn of educational system in Nigeria. Christianity came in place and the westerners started to build schools beside church missions where the learning of Reading, Writing and Arithmetic (3RS) was made a priority. Gradually, indigenous education started to give way to formal, western education obtainable in school setting. As at between 1842 and 1882, educational practices were not coordinated in Nigeria (Ajayi, 2004). When the foreigners came and precisely in 1868, the first language of instruction used by the Catholic father was Portuguese. The priests were French speaking and the colony was English while the natives were Yoruba by tribe (Ajayi). This implies that there was no specific or uniform language as at then. The Nigerians that attended missionary schools were provided with job opportunities in the offices of the white missionaries.

However, the ex - slaves that settled in Lagos encouraged their children to get enlisted into missionary schools. Within a short while, schools became overcrowded and employment opportunity became narrowed down to the few graduates. This brought about the agitations for creation of secondary school in Nigeria. From 1859 that marked the creation of the first grammar school called Church Mission Society Grammar School in Lagos till 1908, schools were under the missionaries. In 1909, about fifty years after the successful creation, funding and controlling of secondary schools by the missionaries in Nigeria, Nigerian government opened Queen's college in Lagos, the first government owned secondary school in Nigeria. This is not to say that the missionaries handed off from creating and funding schools. In 1859, the Church Mission Society established St. Andrew's College, Oyo. Other churches too followed suit in creating training schools across the country. The graduates were fixed immediately and there was no bottleneck competition for vacancies after graduation. Not until 1909 under the leadership of Hanns Vischer who opened Nassarawa Training School, the establishment of teacher training colleges seemed to be solely missionaries.

The Problem

Tertiary education gained a newer dimension when Yaba Higher College was founded in 1932 in Lagos suburb. It could be affirmed that even though 1926 educational ordinance marked the pivot upon which education in Nigeria was built, Elliot's 14 member -Commission of June 1943 was the birth of University College, Ibadan Nigeria in March 25th 1948'. Today, Nigeria seems to have the largest number of tertiary institutions in Sub-

Saharan Africa. Notwithstanding the possibility that South African's tertiary enrolment may be higher, Nigeria seems to boast more of tertiary institutions. In 2005, Nigeria had over 75 universities, 41 polytechnics and 62 colleges of education (Adedipe, 2005).

Missionaries were first in control of schools, particularly tertiary institutions. Later, it became missionary versus Federal Government. In 1979, State government was licensed to operate state owned universities and other tertiary institutions. It started with the approval of Rivers State University of Science and Technology. In 1999, the National University Commission (NUC) granted three private Universities the license to operate University Education. As at present, Federal government of Nigeria has 27 universities. The state government has 33 universities while 41 others are owned by private bodies and hence a total number of 101 universities. Government and Private owned Polytechnics, Monotechnics and colleges are numerous. Licensing of private bodies or individuals to operate tertiary institutions seem to be the last straw that broke the camel's back because educational issues became more complicated in Nigeria (Bridget, 2011). Besides the fact that Nigeria does not have the facilities and manpower that could commensurate with the number of higher institutions available in the country, governments' allocation to educational sector in the country seems to be very poor. The grant in aids that could widen the scope of researches in academia is not forthcoming as expected. The most threatening of it all is that the available job opportunities after graduation is 99 percent lower than the enrolment figures in Nigerian higher institutions (Oladele, 2009). The alarming rates of unemployment are consistently discussed in all nooks and crannies in Nigeria. The need to be self employed by Nigerian youths is what is being regularly evangelized. Nigeria prides herself in having thousands of investors scattered around the Niger Delta and the up North, has the second biggest Liquefied Natural Gas in Africa and consider herself to be the giant of Africa in every ramification, yet, unemployment is as high as 79% in the country. It was based on this that the researcher deemed it appropriate to investigate the perception of Nigerian parents towards the employability of the Nigerians in private tertiary institutions in the public services after graduation.

The research question raised in this study is 'what is the perception of parents in Ekiti state towards the employability of their wards in private tertiary institutions into public service after graduation?

The three null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance in this study are:

H₀₁: Gender difference will not significantly influence the perception of Ekiti State resident parents towards the employability of their wards in private tertiary institutions into public service after graduation.

Table 1. Percentage and frequency table showing the perception of parents in Ekiti state towards the employability of their wards in private tertiary institutions into public service after graduation.

| Options | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------|-----------|----------------|
| Positive | 21 | 04 |
| Negative | 229 | 96 |
| TOTAL | 250 | 100 |

Table 2. t-test statistics showing the perception of Ekiti State resident parents towards the employability of their wards based on sex.

| Group | N | X | S.D | t-cal | t-value |
|--------|-----|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| Male | 151 | 56.10 | 31.91 | | |
| Female | 99 | 31.88 | 23.41 | 1.11 | 1.96 |

P > 0.05

H0₂: Employment type will not significantly influence the perception of Ekiti state resident Nigerian parents towards the employability of their wards in private tertiary institutions into public service after graduation.

H0₃: Educational Background will not significantly influence the perception of Ekiti state resident Nigerian parents towards the employability of their wards in private tertiary institutions into public service after graduation.

RESEARCH METHOD

A descriptive research design was adopted in this study. The sample of the study consisted of 250 respondents selected using multi stage sampling technique. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a senatorial district from the three senatorial zones in Ekiti and to select 1500 parents. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 301 parents that in one way or the other had wards in private tertiary institutions. Using proportional and stratified random sampling technique, 250 respondents were selected based on sex, educational background and types of employment. A self designed questionnaire titled 'Private tertiary institutions and employment (PTIE)' was used as an instrument in gathering the data used for the study. The instrument was divided into two sections, A and B. Section A explores the biodata of the respondents while section B contains 25 items that explore the perceptions of the respondents. The face and content validities of the instrument were ensured while the reliability was ascertained at $r=87.2$, using test re test method. The instrument was personally administered by the researcher. The data collected were analysed using percentage score and t-test statistics. Hypotheses raised were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Frequency

counts and percentages were used in answering the research question raised while t- test statistics were used in testing the three hypotheses formulated.

RESULTS

The results of the study were presented based on research question and hypotheses.

Research Question

The research question raised in this study is what is the perception of parents in Ekiti state towards the employability of their wards in private tertiary institutions into public service after graduation?

Table 1 above shows that 96 percent of the respondents have a negative perception towards the employability of their wards in private tertiary institutions into public service after graduation. This implies that a huge number of the parents did not have a hope in the possibility of the government providing employment in the public service for their wards after graduation.

The null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance in this study are:

H0₁: Gender difference will not significantly influence the perception of Ekiti State resident parents towards the employability of their wards in private tertiary institutions into public service after graduation.

Table 2 above reveals that the t-cal (1.11) is lower than the t-value (1.96). This implies that gender has no influence on the perceptions of the respondents. The hypothesis that says gender difference will not significantly influence the perception of Ekiti State resident parents towards the employability of their wards in private tertiary institutions into public service after

Table 3. Showing the t-test analysis of the parents' perception based on employment type.

| Variables | N | X | S.D | Df | t-cal | t-value |
|--------------------------------------|-----|--------|-------|-----|-------|---------|
| Parents in government establishments | 183 | 62.91 | 19.02 | | | |
| Parents in private establishments. | 67 | 48.43. | 09.17 | 117 | 1.10 | 1.96 |

p>0.05

Table 4. t-test table showing the difference in the perceptions of the parents based on educational background.

| Duty Post | N | X | S.D | t-cal | t-value |
|-------------------------------------|-----|----|-------|-------|---------|
| Below Higher National Diploma (HND) | 107 | 37 | 27.91 | 1.32 | 1.96 |
| Above HND | 143 | 52 | 61.17 | | |

P>0.05

graduation is accepted.

H0₂: Employment type will not significantly influence the perception of Ekiti State resident Nigerian parents towards the employability of their wards in private tertiary institutions into public service after graduation.

Table 3 above shows the employment type of the respondents and their perceptions towards the employability of their wards in private tertiary institutions into public service after graduation. The t-cal (1.10) is lower than the t-value (1.96) and this implies that the hypothesis that says employment type will not significantly influence the perception of Ekiti State resident Nigerian parents towards the employability of their wards in private tertiary institutions into public service after graduation is accepted.

H0₃: Educational background will not significantly influence the perception of Ekiti state resident Nigerian parents towards the employability of their wards in private tertiary institutions into public service after graduation.

Table 4 above shows that t-cal (1.32) is lower than t-value (1.96). This implies that whether the parents were graduates or not did not significantly influence their perception towards the employability of their wards in private tertiary institutions into public service after graduation. The hypothesis that says educational background will not significantly influence the perception of Ekiti State resident Nigerian parents towards the employability of their wards in private tertiary institutions into public service after graduation is accepted.

DISCUSSION

Having analyzed data as presented above, the following findings were arrived at. In an answer to the research question raised in the study, as high as 96% of the respondents displayed a negative perception towards the

employability of their wards in private tertiary institutions into public service after graduation.

Hypothesis 1 indicates a non significant difference in the perceptions of the parents based on gender differences (male and female). This finding is in line with Dickson (2001) in the claim that reality must have to be faced by every right thinking individual about an issue at hand based on circumstances.

Also, it was revealed in hypothesis 2 that employment type has no significant influence on the perception of the parents. The t-cal, 1.34 is lower than the t-value 1.96. This implies that perception was the same whether or not a respondent was in a private business or in a government own establishments. Finally, it was revealed in the test of hypothesis 3 that Educational background (graduate or no graduate) has no significant influence in the perceptions of the parents towards the employability of their wards in private tertiary institutions into public service after graduation.

Implication of the Study

The main implication of this study was that the granting of licenses to private organisations and individuals to own tertiary institutions in Nigeria may be compounding problems of unemployment. The turn out of graduates from the public schools seems to be higher than the available job vacancies after graduation and hence the narrower the chances of graduates from private public settings from being considered for government job at all.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It is concluded in this study that the perception of Nigerian parents in Ekiti state towards the employability

of their wards in private tertiary institutions into public service after graduation is negative. The study revealed that the respondents were not different in their perceptions in spite of the differences in sex, employment type and educational background. Based on this, it is recommended that the stakeholders in Nigeria should consider the creation of job opportunity as a priority for the intending young graduates rather than increasing the number of tertiary institutions in the country.

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