

**BASIC SKILLS NEEDED BY COMPUTER EDUCATION
GRADUATES FOR SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT IN
ENUGU STATE: AN IMPLICATION FOR COUNSELLING.**

Odoh, Cornelius Ekene

odohekene555@gmail.com

Department of Mathematics and Computer Education

&

Ogbozor, Grace

Department of Mathematics and Computer Education

graceogbozor@gmail.com

&

Asogwa, Solomon Chinago

Department of Guidance and Counselling

soloasogwa@gmail.com

Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu State

Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to ascertain the skills needed by Computer Education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State. Two research questions were formulated and guided the study, while two hypotheses were tested. Survey research design was used for the study. The population for the study was 100 which comprised 20 lecturers and 80 final year students in Department of Computer Education in the Federal and State universities in Enugu State. No sampling was made. A 13-itemed Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The instrument was face-validated by two experts in Science and Computer Education and an expert in Measurement and Evaluation, in the Department of Science and Computer Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT). The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha and an overall reliability index of

0.97 was obtained. The researcher administered the instrument by hand. The research questions were answered with mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested with t-test at .05 level of significance. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for all the analyses. The results of the analyses revealed among others, that all the items under modern communication skills, adaptability skills and creative skills were highly required by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State. The null hypotheses tested showed no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students of computer education in both variables. Based on the findings, some implications were deducted and it was recommended among others, that lecturers should adopt the adaptability skills and creative skills in teaching the students for easy transition and acquisition of the skills amongst the students, government and school administrator should promote the teaching of the identified skills to the students.

Keywords: Skills, Computer Education, Graduate, Sustainable Employment and Counselling.

Introduction

The Nigerian educational system over the years laid emphasis on production of school leavers with employable skills. The philosophy and goals of education in Nigeria as stated in the National Policy on Education (2013) include the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical, as equipment for the individual to line in and contribute to the development of the society. For this, to be gainfully employed one must acquire basic and appropriate skills. Skill is the ability to perform a task to a predetermined level of competence. Oluyomi and Adedeji (2012) defined skills as; ability to perform a task to a predefined level of competence. They identified two categories of skills; transferable or generic skills which can be used across large numbers of different occupations, and vocational skills which are specific occupational or technical skills needed to work within an occupation or occupational group. They identified analytical, critical thinking, communication, entrepreneurial, decision making, interpersonal, problem solving, self-directed and numeracy skills as generic. On the other hand, vocational skills depend on the occupation or vocation concerned. There are so many opportunities for lecturers to learn and acquire new skills over the internet, keep up with credentials and in turn help them improve their teaching abilities in computer education. Computer education can be looked at, as a process of educating the people on how to use a computer to run programs of diverse application including business, industry and commerce (Okorie, 2011). Computer education is a system of skills acquisition in the use of computer to solve problems (Odoh, 2020). Here computer is seen as a subject organized to enable people to understand the functions, uses and limitations of computer and to provide an opportunity for the study of modern methods of information processing. It is an academic subject because it encourages an understanding of the studies implications. Computer education is one of the programmes offered in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, to train students in skills to be self-reliant. Computer Education graduates need skills to make them competent in the world for

sustainable employment as well as increase productivity. To be occupationally competent in the labour market, graduates must acquire proficiency in some basic skills for sustainable employment.

Sustainable employment is a way of building resilience to cope with future shocks and enable future transitions and advancement at work. An employee's level of job sustenance shows how relevant the person has been on the job. The ability to sustain an employment depends on the efficiency and quality of the competency skills set possessed by the employee. Sustainable employment depends on an employee's ability to meet the hard, business and soft competences of the employer. Sustainable employment addresses incompetency and low skills, facilitates career transitions, achievement of inclusive growth, and helps overcome poverty and unemployment to be sustained for an indefinite period of time. In early sixties, competition for employment was not as stiff as is today. Young graduates in most fields did not face this type of competition. This is because the demand for labour was higher than the supply. Consequently, companies visited universities with great offers for graduates willing to take up appointment in their companies. However, with increasing population of school leavers specifically graduates of higher institutions without corresponding increase in job opportunities, the reverse became the situation. Supply of labour both skilled and unskilled is now more than the demand. A lot of factors came into play under the new situation. Employers are no longer willing to pay high wages, hiring and firing, less worker motivation among others became the order of the day in most organizations.

The problem of education in Nigeria include among others, lack of qualified personnel, poor and or inadequate infrastructure, inappropriate school curriculum for skills development and poor personnel motivation (Okorie, 2011). These factors negatively affect the quality of learning outcomes and thus job prospects of graduates. One thing that baffles many authorities especially researchers in education, is that education is yet to realize its objective of equipping graduates with needed skills for gainful employment or sustainable employment. The apparent population of idle graduates tends to substantiate this assertion. It has been suggested that the quality of education that is received in schools is unable to equip students with the skills needed for sustainable employment (Agomuo, (2015). Technology is increasingly being introduced into many offices in Nigeria, thus introducing changes in the office operations. Technology cannot do anything without human for information to be timely, accurate, complete, available and usable in the desired format; greater attention should be focused on the people component of the system. The ability to convert business information into sound judgment distinctively requires human efforts. People, technology, procedures and space as components of a system which are inter related, interacting, and interdependent. Trained manpower is needed since the adequate use of advanced technology is highly dependent on the general education and culture of labour, there is growing connection between the intellectual skills of the people and the development potential of a country. Through technological advancement, the distance over which humans can communicate has become greater. Modern technology society is constantly expanding intellectual and

economic capabilities for achievement of more satisfactory results. Oduma and Ile (2012) noted that employers now emphasize the need for employees who have personal social skills, together with any technical know-how which may be required.

Among the core workers, there is an expectation that they will be able to work in a rapidly changing environment, engaging in “rule making” rather than rule following behaviour, work in project teams and share the same personal chemistry as others in the organization (Akinson, 2016). To acquire skills there must be some form of training. This is because modern office requires a higher degree of ability and operating skills. The emphasis on skills acquisition is due to the high rate of unemployment among graduates, high rate of crimes due to untrained youths in modern society and challenging economy. Skill development can be accomplished through work experience or through education in school, workshop or laboratories. The major objective of skills is to have a successful life in which sustainable employment has a major role to play. Okoye and Pollard (2019) noted that employability is about work and the performance ability to be employed. It also refers to a person’s performance capability in securing and maintaining an employment. In Computer Education, employment depends not only on whether one is able to fulfill the paper requirements of specific goals. It also connotes how one practically stands relative to others within a group of job seekers. Gore (2015) noted that graduates employability depends on their performance assets in terms of the knowledge, skills and attitudes they possess, the way they can use and deploy those assets, the way they present them to employers and the context (e.g. personal circumstances and the labour market environment within which they seek for employment). Furrier and Sels (2013) also noted that employability is perceived at individual levels as continuously fulfilling, acquiring or creating of employment through the optimal use of performance competences or basic skills.

Skills or employability skills are those general skills and knowledge needed by person to be effective in obtaining, retaining and progressing in sustainable employment. Employability skills enable an individual to acquire and keep a job. Employers of labour are forced with too many job applications for very few jobs. Therefore, apart from good educational qualifications, employers need creative, flexible and visionary workers who possess a broad range of interpersonal and management skills (Nyanabo and AhuKannah, 2018). Samson (2019) viewed employability skills as those skills needed by an individual to get a job and progress on the job such as verbal communication, willingness and ability to work with others, how to prepare resume, how to complete an application form, how to conduct interview, willingness to follow directions, initiative and ability to learn new tasks. The job for which employers are hiring workers in this modern world requires workers to have a wider range of skills than ever before (Odoh, 2020). Odufuwa (2012) stated that since no nation can boast of better development without the aid of computer skills in her educational programme, calculated effort should be made for citizens to achieve technological breakthrough through skill acquisition. Odoh (2020) stated that the skills that employers now demand for, in addition to academic skills are; adaptability skills and creative skills.

Adaptability skill is about having the ability to change or be changed to fit altered circumstances. There is need for adaptability because of instances such as advancement in technology, remote work team, and innovative practice among others. The changing world which makes employers sought for graduates who can adapt to changing circumstances. Fitting into the circumstances as a result of advancement in technology requires a creative based skill. Creative skill is the kind of thinking that leads to new insights, novel approaches, fresh perspectives, and whole new ways of understanding and conceiving of things. The product of creative thought include some obvious things like, music, poetry, dance, literature, inventions and technical innovations. Most graduates are unemployed due to inability to possess these skills (Samson (2019) This unfortunate situation, accounts for the increases in crime rate in Nigeria, however when a graduate is well knowledgeable in one or two skills, this will place him or her at an advantage over other employees by either establishing a business or getting a job with the skills. There are instances where the employees fail or perform poorly in their tasks, because they are not knowledgeable in some needed skills they ought to possess as an employee to cope in the changing office. In Nigeria, the situation is alarming. Statistics, according to National Planning Commissions Performance Monitoring Report on Government's Ministries Department and Agencies (MDA's) indicated unemployment rate in 2010 was 21% which rose to 23.9% in 2011. A National Baseline Youth Survey Report by National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2012) reveals that 54% of Nigerian Youths are unemployed out of a total population of 64 million comprising youths aged between 15 and 35 years out of this, 51.9% are females compared to 48.1% males (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). It is on this note that the researchers carried out this research work on basic skills needed of computer Education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State.

Statement of the Problem

The introduction of computers, internet, facsimile, word processing equipment and other information communication facilities has greatly affected the increased succession of hardware and software. It is noted in this regard that the Nigeria education system has failed to cope with the current trend and changes in equipping her graduates with the requisite skills needed for effective job performance virtually in all fields. The Educational system has continued to send out graduates whose performance ability in employment is in heavy doubt. Experiences have shown that employers of labour have continued to prove this by rejecting most graduate job applicants during recruitment. Specifically, the skill needs of most Nigeria graduates are relatively very high. Most graduates do not possess the requisite skills needed for effective performance in employment setting. In view of these, it follows then, that the employees in an organization have to move with the trend of the changing technology and be able to perform their duties and make meaningful contributions to the success of the organizational goals, as well as to stay on their job. This situation is therefore questioning the quality of training given to these students while they are in school. The researchers are worried that if this condition should be allowed to continue, the products

of computer education graduate from universities in Enugu State might not be relevant in today's employment environment that are characterized by automation. This would result to a situation where graduates of computer education programme would not perform well or meet the employers demand and therefore rendered unemployed. The problem of the study posed as a question is, what are the basic skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to ascertain the basic skills needed by Computer Education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. explore the adaptability skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment.
2. ascertain the creative skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the adaptability skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment?
2. What are creative skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance

- Ho₁ There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students of computer education on the adaptability skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State.
- Ho₂ There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students of computer education on the creative skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State.

Method

Census survey research design was adopted for the study. This implies that the entire respondents were involved. It was considered appropriate for the study following the description of census survey by Nworgu (2015) as the type of survey research design in which the entire population for the study is used. The population for the study is 100 Lecturers and Students, comprising 25 and 55 computer education final year students (2018/2019) session and 6 and 14 lecturers from Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) and University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) respectively. This is based on the data obtained from a preliminary survey conducted by the researcher in the Computer Education departments of Federal and State universities in Enugu State. The

population size was manageable hence there was no sampling. A 13-item questionnaire developed by the researcher was used for data collection. The questionnaire titled; Basic Skills needed by Computer Education Graduates for Sustainable Employment is of two parts. Part I which concerned the personal data of the respondents and part II that consists of the items that addressed research questions which was pertinent to the variables of the study. The 13 items of the questionnaire that guided the study were arranged in two clusters in line with the two research questions that guided the study. Specifically, Cluster A has 6 items on the adaptability skills while Cluster B has 7 items on the creative skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment. The items were structured on four-point rating scale with the following response options: of Highly Required (HR), Averagely Required (AR), Required (R), Not Required (NR). The Instrument Was validated by three research experts; two from Mathematics and Computer Education Department and one other expert from the field of Measurement and Evaluation, all from the Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT).

The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient, overall reliability coefficient was 0.97, indicating that the instrument was reliable for use in data collection. The questionnaire were administered and retrieved by the researchers with the help of one research assistant that was properly trained on the content of the questionnaire and its administration to ensure that the questionnaire was properly administered. 100 copies of the questionnaire was administered to the total population, and was retrieved and used for analysis. Data collected with the questionnaire was analyzed using Mean(x) with Standard Deviation (SD) to answer each of the research questions. However, each of the two hypotheses was tested using t-test statistics at .05 level of significance. The analysis was computer based with the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze the respondents' ratings. The decision rule for the Mean(x) was based on the principle of Mean, **2.50**

$$\text{gotten by } \frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = 2.50$$

<2.50 rejected or ≥2.50 accepted; any item with a mean score less than **2.50** was considered not required and any item mean of **2.50** and above was considered required. The null hypotheses were rejected when the significant level was less than and were not rejected when the significant level was more than 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the adaptability skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State?

Table 1: Mean responses and standard deviation of the respondents on the adaptability skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State

N=100

S/N	The adaptability skill needed are:	HR	AR	R	NR	X	SD	DEC
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1.	Embrace change in work and work environment even when there are some ambiguities	29	24	23	24	2.58	1.15	Required
2.	Acquire new knowledge, skill and processes	49	18	16	17	2.99	1.16	Required
3.	Maintain or shift focus on operational goals in response to changing organizational priorities	50	16	19	15	3.01	1.14	Required
4.	Respond quickly to unexpected events	54	15	15	16	3.07	1.16	Required
5.	Contribute to innovative solutions.	55	16	15	14	3.12	1.12	Required
6.	Think creatively	41	17	20	22	2.77	1.21	Required
GRAND MEAN						2.92	1.16	

Table 1 above presents the results of data analyses for research question one. All the items (1 to 6) had mean responses that were higher than the cut-off point of 2.50. The grand mean (2.92) was also high. This implies that items 1 to 6 constituted the adaptability skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State.

Research Question 2: What are the creative skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State?

Table 2: Mean responses and standard deviation of the respondents on the creative skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State

N=100

S/N	The creative skills needed are:	HR	AR	R	NR	X	SD	DEC
7.	Explore new and different ways of accomplishing a task and processes involved in the tasks.	78	11	8	3	3.64	.76	Required
8.	Apply emotional intelligence to recognize, validate, harness and progress at work	59	31	6	4	3.45	.78	Required
9.	Use creative thinking skills and techniques to innovate processes, project and tasks to implement change to facilitate improvements	57	32	6	5	3.41	.82	Required
10.	Identify and implement new ideas	79	12	5	4	3.66	.76	Required

11.	Break down a subject into parts, detect multiple views, question evidence, hypothesize alternatives and come to sound conclusions	61	34	1	4	3.52	.72	Required
12.	Explore alternatives, challenges assumptions, and examines accuracy of beliefs	76	19	1	4	3.67	.61	Required
13.	Seek out ways to learn more about effectively introducing change in the workplace.	76	19	1	4	3.67	.61	Required

3.57 .72

GRAND MEAN

From Table 2 above, the mean of items 7 to 13 were higher than the cut-off point of 2.50. The value of the grand mean (3.57) was also high. This implies that the respondents agreed that all the items constituted the creative skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students of computer education on the adaptability skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State.

Table 3: t-test on the mean ratings of lecturers and students of computer education on the adaptability skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State.

STATUS	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig.	Dec.
LECTURERS	20	2.05	1.099	-2.362	98	.762	NS
STUDENTS	80	2.71	1.127				

Table 3 shows that the t value for the difference in mean rating of lecturers and students of computer education on the adaptability skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State is -2.362, significant at 0.762 level of significance, which is higher than 0.05 set for the study. The null hypothesis is therefore not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students of computer education on the adaptability skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students of computer education on the creative skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State.

Table 4: t-test on the mean ratings of lecturers and students of computer education on the creative skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State.

STATUS	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig.	Dec.
LECTURERS	20	3.65	.875	.066	98	.742	NS
STUDENTS	80	3.64	.733				

Table 4 shows that the t value for the difference in mean rating of lecturers and students of computer education on the creative skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State is .066, significant at 0.742 level of significance, which is higher than 0.05 set for the study. The null hypothesis is therefore not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students of computer education on the creative skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State.

Summary of Findings

The results of data analyses for the study revealed the following:

1. Respondents responses indicated that adaptability skills are required by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State, which include inter alia, contribute to innovative solution, respond quickly to unexpected events among others. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students of computer education on the adaptability skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State.
2. Respondents responses indicated that creative skills are required by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State, which include inter alia, explore alternatives, challenges assumptions, and examines accuracy of beliefs, use creative thinking skills and techniques to innovate processes, project and tasks to implement change to facilitate improvements, identify and implement new ideas, break down a subject into parts, detect multiple views, question evidence, hypothesize alternatives and come to sound conclusions. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students of computer education on the creative skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study were discussed in line with the research questions that guided the study and hypotheses tested.

Adaptability Skills Needed by Computer Education Graduates for Sustainable Employment

The results of the study with regards to research question one indicated that adaptability skills is highly required for sustainable employment of computer education graduates, the adaptability skills include; embrace change in work and work environment even when there are some ambiguities, acquire new knowledge, skill and processes, maintain or shift focus on operational goals in response to changing organizational priorities, respond quickly to unexpected events, contribute to innovative solutions, and think creatively identified as the adaptability skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment. This finding agree with Gore (2015) which noted that graduates employability depends on their performance assets in terms of the knowledge, skills and attitudes they possess, the way they can use and deploy those assets, the way they present them to employers and the context (e.g. personal circumstances and the labour market environment within which they seek for employment). This implies that adaptability skills are highly needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State.

The test of hypothesis on the adaptability skills needed by computer education graduates showed no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students of computer education graduates on adaptability skill needed for sustainable employment in Enugu State. The implication of this finding was that the status of the respondent has no significant influence on the ratings to the itemized adaptability skills highly needed for computer education graduates for sustainable employment.

Creative Skills Needed by Computer education Graduates for Sustainable Employment

The result of the data analysis in research question two showed that creative skills are needed by the graduates for sustainable employment. The creative skills include; explore new and different ways of accomplishing a task and processes involved in the tasks, apply emotional intelligence to recognize, validate, harness and progress at work, use creative thinking skills and techniques to innovate processes, project and tasks to implement change to facilitate improvements, identify and implement new ideas, Break down a subject into parts, detect multiple views, question evidence, hypothesize alternatives and come to sound conclusions, explore alternatives, challenges assumptions, and examine accuracy of beliefs, Seek out ways to learn more about effectively introducing change in the workplace. This finding is in consonance with Oduma and Ile (2012) which noted that employers now emphasize the need for employees who have personal social skills, together with any technical know-how which may be required. Therefore, the creative skills are highly required by the graduates for sustainable employment and should be possessed by computer graduate and undergraduates alike for sustainable employment.

The test of hypothesis revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students of computer education on the creative skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State. This implies

that creative skills are indispensable for sustainable employment of computer education graduates in Enugu State.

Conclusion of the Study

Based on the findings of the study, the needed skills by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu state includes; adaptability skills and creative skills. It was found that these skills are highly needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment in Enugu State. Based on the empirical findings of this study, it was therefore concluded that the skills identified should be fully integrated into the curriculum used in training computer education students for sustainable employment upon graduation. The lecturers and students shared the same view that these skills were highly required by computer education graduates and cannot be neglected.

Counselling Implication of the Study

The findings of the study based on the result of data analysis had far reaching implications for the government, curriculum planners, universities, computer education programmes administrators, lecturers and students of computer education in universities and general public. The findings of the study have implication for the government in that these identified skills would help in training employable and responsive members of the society. This would reduce the level of unemployment in the society and provide enough tax for the government. The findings of the study would enable the curriculum planners in universities to integrate the much needed skills for successful and sustainable employment of the students after graduation. The result would enable them to conduct curriculum evaluation of computer education in universities. This would enhance the quality of education offered to the students which consequently would address the need of skill mismatch in the society. Furthermore, the findings will enable the administrators in universities to understand the needed skills by computer education graduates for sustainable employment. This would enable them to conduct effective supervision and monitoring of instructional delivery approaches to the society. The lecturers of computer education having identified these skills would make sure that related instructional delivery approaches were used. This would help in inculcating the right skills, knowledge and perception to students during the instructional delivery approaches. The students at the receiving end of the teaching-learning process would be given the opportunity to learn new skills.

Furthermore, the findings of the study would have implication for general public. This is because it revealed needed skills by computer education graduates for sustainable employment, which would in turn reduce the level of unemployment and joblessness among the graduates. The findings of the study would enable the future researcher to have an empirical data on the skills needed by computer education graduates for sustainable employment. This would also add to the available literature in this field of study.

Recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends as follows:

1. The identified skills for sustainable employment should be integrated into the curriculum of computer education programme by the curriculum planners.
2. Lecturers should adopt these skills and make it practically oriented instead of theoretical-based to enable computer education students acquire them for sustainable employment after graduation.
3. The computer equipment should be made available by the school administrator and the government in order to promote the teaching of the identified skills to the students.
4. The school administrators should supervise the teaching of the identified skills in order to promote quality in the mastery of the identified skills by the students.
5. Seminars and workshops should be organized by computer expert for students, to enlighten them on the importance of acquiring these identified skills.

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