Influence of University Internal Quality Assurance Practices on Employability of Graduates of Educational Management in South-West, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the relationship between internal quality assurance practices and employability skills of graduates of Educational Management in public Universities in South-West, Nigeria. A descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted. The population comprised 1,036 final-year full-time students in 9 public universities in six states in South-West, Nigeria. The study sampled 354 final-year students using a multistage random sampling technique. Two research instruments tagged as Internal Quality Assurance Practices Questionnaire for Students, and Graduates Employability Skills Rating Scale with reliability coefficients of 0.81 and 0.70 respectively were used for data collection. The demographic data and research questions were analysed using a frequency distribution table and percentages. The null hypotheses were tested using correlation and multiple regression at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that there was a significant relationship between internal quality assurance practices and employability skills acquired by Educational Management graduates in public Universities. There was a significant joint contribution of internal quality assurance practices to employability skills acquired by Education Management graduates in public Universities ($F_{4, 349}$= 8.227; p<.05). Findings also showed a significant relative influence of internal quality assurance practices (curriculum validation and evaluation, and labour market assessments) on employability skills acquired by graduates of Educational Management in public Universities. The study concludes that high levels of internal quality assurance practices contributed significantly to employability skills of graduates of Educational Management. The study recommends among others that two-levels of internal quality practice should be integrated into undergraduate degree programme of Educational Management.

Keywords: Educational management, employability skills, internal quality assurance practices, public universities, quality assurance

Introduction

Graduate unemployment including those who studied Educational Management is still high in Nigeria despite the efforts made by university authorities and other stakeholders in terms of curriculum review to bring the problem to a sustainable decline. Employers often complain that graduates do not have

the adequate skills needed in the workplace which is evidence that the graduates that are being churned out of universities in Nigeria is an issue of concern. The University is the highest level of educational institution in Nigeria. It is an essential institution mandated to produce a quality workforce for national development. In Nigeria, there has been a growing number of universities over the last two decades. Many tertiary institutions are demanding university status, and many more private universities are being established annually. Within this context, the quality of university education and its programmes may be compromised, and at the centre of such a problem is the employability of university graduates. Globally, graduate unemployment has attracted the attention of manufacturing industries, academia, government levels, and other stakeholders who are concerned about improving the quality of higher education institutions. The reason is that, when it comes to workforce readiness, the employers' and students' expectations have far exceeded university expectations. In the context of constantly changing information and knowledge-intensive economies, university graduates must be promptly and sustainably employable. To do so, graduates must exhibit employable abilities, dispositions, and qualities that are adaptable to a range of work situations in addition to maintaining and developing knowledge and skills that are unique to their discipline or occupation (Oshinyadi, 2024).

According to Abe and Uwadia (2023), employability are skills, knowledge, abilities, behaviour, and other characteristics that an individual requires to successfully perform work roles or occupational functions. It is a "set of achievements - skills, understanding, and attributes" that make graduates more likely to gain employment and succeed in their chosen occupations, benefiting them, the workforce, the community, and the economy. These sets of achievements are required for skillful performance and job opportunities in the labour market (Duszynski, 2022). One aspect of employability is the possession of employability skills. Employability skills are the fundamental skills required for obtaining, retaining, and performing well in a job (Fulgence, 2015). Asirvatham, Dhinakar, and Ganapathi (2017) asserted that there is a huge gap between what the education industry demands or needs and what is available or prepared by universities in terms of skilled students. Enhancing the employability skills of future education managers is considered an important step by universities to maintain the quality of the education system.

The university is one of the tertiary institutions in Nigeria where the Educational Management programme is offered to undergraduate students. Generally, the academic programme exists to pursue some primary and secondary mandates. The primary mandate is to train students for the acquisition of management skills in education while the acquisition of pedagogical skills and knowledge in their chosen subject remains the secondary mandate. Nawaz and Reddy (2013) stated that improving employability skills in management education is a priority for all universities and colleges. Language competency, cognitive skills, and functional and interpersonal skills are all required for management graduates.

An educational management programme is an academic programme of university education like other degree programmes. One of the goals of the educational management programme, according to the Department of Educational Management TASUED Handbook (2017), is to develop the skills and knowledge of those who manage the education system. The programme is specifically designed to train school administrators, teachers, supervisors, and policymakers. It encompasses the training of individuals to manage all levels of the nation's educational system. Also, educational management refers to the aspect of educational training that an individual receives with the primary goal of acquiring adequate attitudes, concepts, knowledge, understanding, and skills in school management activities for use in careers as an administrator, manager, or teacher and wherever they may find themselves in society (Asiegbu & Ezeugbor, 2018).

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is defined by Sanchez-Puchol et al (2018) as a plan, implementation, control, and development of the university's quality standards to obtain stakeholder satisfaction and ensure that the quality of graduates follows the standard competencies defined. The IQA system assists in ensuring that a product, service, or project meets a minimum standard of quality. Quality assurance is achieved by continuously monitoring performance and demonstrating

performance quality through policies and procedures. According to Andleeb and Jusoh (2020), self-assessment of an academic programme is a part of the internal quality assurance practices of universities. Boateng et al (2015) identified monitoring of teaching and learning processes, curriculum validation and evaluation, attachment, internships and practicum, and job and career fairs as parts of institutional quality practices. All these measures are designed to ensure that the knowledge and skills are not only acquired by students but also to make them ready for the world of work. Pavlin (2016) stressed the need for quality assessment instruments to monitor education management students' experience of the labour market. In respect to this, the importance of practical training was mentioned as the key element of preparing graduates for work. Practical training, such as practicum and teaching practice, has been described as a necessary tool for transitioning from content-centered to learner-centered curricula, as well as an empowering tool for the development of soft skills (Sarker et al. 2021). From this indication, it is expected that this practice will assist the university management in the autonomy of curricula development to make regular updates in line with emerging student needs.

Oshinyadi (2024) asserted that universities can internally adopt four broad self-assessments as part of the internal quality assurance practices to promote graduate employability skills concerning interpersonal communication skills, self-management skills, critical thinking skills, management-specific skills, and teacher professionalism skills. These internal practices can be categorised as either curriculum validation, teaching and learning assessments, graduate skill assessments or labour market assessments. Curriculum validation and evaluation refers to quality practice undertaken by the Department (Head of Department, staff, and students) alongside its external stakeholders (management professionals from industries, alumni of the department, government and private employers, and/or private school leaders) that aimed at improving the curriculum of Educational Management programme and quality of its graduates.

Teaching and learning assessments according to Oshinyadi and Odufejo (2023) refer to assessments of all the teaching and learning processes by academic staff and students that will enable the department to measure the effectiveness of teaching and the quality of its graduates. Such an assessment could be related to student course assessment, students' programme satisfaction survey, workload assessment, student progression studies, programme evaluation, students' monitoring by external examiners, evaluation of academic staff by students, mentoring arrangements, and assessments of availability of learning resources. Graduate skills assessment refers to skill assessment procedures given to students in the university between their matriculation and before their final year examination. Such assessment could be related to pre-employment/mock employment examinations, job and career fairs, simulation interviews, and micro-teaching. Labour market assessment refers to quality assessment that focuses on evaluating the employability skills of students at the workplace of their first employers during on-field university coursework such as industrial attachments, internships, and practicum exercises.

From the foregoing background, this paper presents the relationship between university internal quality assurance practices and the employability of graduates of Educational Management in the South-West, Nigeria which would benefit existing students of the academic programme in shaping their employability skills. The identification of employability-related quality assurance tools, practices, and strategies would inform the need for swift initiation of policy briefs, reforms, and effective practices by education stakeholders such as quality assurance practitioners, institutional policymakers, and national policymakers that would enhance employability skills of students and potential university graduates required by employers of labour. Findings would be utilized to update the curriculum and increase student understanding of job-related skills.

Statement of the Problem

Graduate unemployment including those who studied Educational Management is still high in Nigeria despite the efforts made by university authorities and other stakeholders in terms of curriculum review to bring the problem to a sustainable decline. Available data in 2020 from the

National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) proved that the unemployment rate increased to 33.3 percent in the fourth quarter of 2020 from 20.4 percent in the fourth quarter of 2017. This figure portrays the widening gap between the university system and employers of labour in Nigeria. Employers often complain that graduates do not have the adequate skills needed in the workplace, and that demonstration and documentation of graduates' actual skills and abilities are inadequate which is evidence that the graduates that are being churned out of universities in Nigeria is an issue of concern. The mandate of the Education Management undergraduate degree programme is to prepare graduates for a broad range of job skills demanded in both public and private education sectors. It is expected that graduates of Education Management find careers as either school administrators or classroom teachers immediately after the completion of their academic programme. The target employers of these graduates are mostly found in the primary and secondary levels of education. However, there have been conflicting reports as to why education management graduates are trained in the first place. While employers in governmental organisations (TESCOM, SUBEB, Civil Service Commission, or LGEA) mainly demand that graduates adequately have the teaching qualification requirements to take on teaching positions, fewer emphases are placed on managerial positions that should qualify Education Management graduates for job consideration as school administrators. This practice has often been blamed on public policy surrounding the condition of service in the Civil Service. In addition, some education stakeholders have often argued that acquiring the needed managerial skills for effective school operations is only possible through prolonged years of teaching experience. This assumption has branded fresh graduates of Education Management as not possessing the needed skills for employment in the public sector of our education system. In the same vein, employers in the private school system though with a less stringent employment policy, are meticulous in opening managerial positions directly to fresh graduates of Education Management.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of internal quality assurance practices on the employability skills of graduates of Educational Management in public Universities in South-West, Nigeria. Specifically, the study intended to:

1) determine the correlation between internal quality assurance practices (curriculum validation and evaluation, teaching and learning assessments, graduate skills assessments, and labour market assessments) and employability skills (interpersonal communication skills, self-management skills, critical thinking skills, management-specific skills, and teacher professionalism skills) acquired by Educational Management graduates in public Universities in South-West, Nigeria.
2) determine the joint contribution of internal quality assurance practices to the employability of graduates of Educational Management in public Universities in South-West, Nigeria; and
3) examine the relative influence of internal quality assurance practices (curriculum validation and evaluation, teaching and learning assessments, graduate skills assessments, and labour market assessments) on the employability of graduates of Educational Management in public Universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

To achieve the stated specific objectives above, the following null hypotheses were formulated by the researchers:

H_{01}: There is no significant correlation between internal quality assurance practices (curriculum validation and evaluation, teaching and learning assessments, graduate skills assessments, and labour market assessments) and employability skills (interpersonal communication skills, self-management skills, critical thinking skills, management-specific skills, and teacher professionalism skills) acquired by Educational Management graduates in public Universities in South-West, Nigeria.

H_{02}: There is no significant joint contribution of internal quality assurance practices to the employability of graduates of Educational Management in public Universities in South-West, Nigeria.

H_{03}: There is no significant relative influence of internal quality assurance practices (curriculum validation and evaluation, teaching and learning assessments, graduate skills assessments, and labour market assessments) on the employability of graduates of Educational Management in public Universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Literature Review

This study is anchored on Employability Development Theory (EDT) by Harvey (2010). Employability Development Theory states that higher education institutions provide a range of employability improvement opportunities for students including self-presentation, life-long learning, and many others. While some developments are explicit and produced as add-on modules, others are explicitly apparent and entrenched in degree programmes. The employability development model represents the roles of graduates, higher education institutions, employers, and employment in generating employment. Harvey's theory supports the need for graduates to possess the qualities and abilities necessary to get employment. The idea is that the institution offers possibilities for employability development; the graduate takes advantage of them and gains "employability." This approach assumes that employability is a skill that can be learned. It also assumes that the learned knowledge consists of a set of skills. The theory is relevant to this study, because if 'employability development opportunities' is pursued as a university-based development programme, then, internal quality assurance practices could be used by university management as an injectable mechanism for students' engagement, pedagogy, reflection, and articulation. Akkermans et al (2023) also build on the exposition of Employability Development Theory by extending the ideas of DeVos et al (2019) who argued that the transition into initial employment destinations is no longer a one-off decision but, instead, an ongoing series of learning cycles that contribute to employability.

Few existing studies have been conducted on management graduates as regards the relationship between internal quality assurance and employability. These studies are reviewed below. In their 2013 study, Nawaz and Reddy examined the employability skills needed for management graduates and the skill sets of management students that will best meet future labour market needs. The methodology used was a review of academic reports, journals, and theoretical and empirical research papers. Their findings demonstrated that to be employable in the sector, one must possess language proficiency, cognitive capabilities, functional skills, and people skills. What Companies Value in the MBAs They Recruit: Rebalancing the Management Education Curriculum was a study by Rao et al. (2014) that concluded that employers appreciated three quality skills that guide curricular improvement. These abilities include teamwork, practice orientation, and viewpoint development. Data were gathered from MBA supervisors and senior recruiters at both public and private sector organisations. Their research produced six recommendations that, in the opinion of the employers, are crucial as a model for future curricular practice: Before the awarding of the MBA degree, the curriculum is introduced through practice, critical thinking and diagnosis, integrative thinking, learning capability, a focus on a complex made up of leadership, team player, innovator, and corporate citizen, and apprenticeship.

DeSilva (2015) looked at the employability skills of management graduates to highlight what qualities, talents, and competencies companies look for beyond excellent majors to engage in the workplace of a globally competitive marketplace. According to the report, academics may "get with it" when working with all interested parties, particularly advisory councils of senior executives and alumni. The researcher concluded that to develop the organisational structure and infrastructure for continual curriculum relevance to fulfil employability skills, educators, alumni/students, policymakers, and business/industry leaders must work together. To assess students' assessments of

their level of readiness across business and management sectors, Ramisetty and Desai (2017) devised an instrument. The study's goal was to discover how final-year postgraduate management students perceived their employability abilities. There were 60 participants in the study, which used a cross-sectional design and non-probability sampling. Five major scales were identified through factor analysis (Communication Skills, Personal and Professional Advancement, Adaptation Skills and Flexibility, Intellectual and Technical Skills, and Understand organisation's Vision and Development), and the acceptable range of Cronbach's alpha reliability was 0.7-0.8. All item and scale means fell within the acceptable range, indicating that all students believed they possessed these abilities. T-test results show no significant difference between males and females in any of the scale means ($p > .05$). The study's findings aid in identifying the discrepancy between the competences needed for entry-level management roles and employability skills.

Joshi did a study on problems with employment for management students in 2018. In addition to student comments, the researcher also used secondary data from a variety of scientific papers, websites, books, and periodicals. The researcher discovered that among the talents considered by employers are those related to problem-solving, interpersonal relationships, communication, integration of value, result-orientedness, domain knowledge expertise, decision-making, leadership, and teamwork. According to the study, these skills can be developed by conducting skill development programmes, clarifying or explaining domain knowledge concepts, providing students with more case studies, providing effective communication lectures that encourage them to improve their communication, providing effective summer internship programmes, and collaborating with business employers and management schools. The comparative evaluation of the application of quality assurance techniques in educational management programmes of federal and state institutions in South-East, Nigeria, was the topic of Asiegbu and Ezeugbor's (2018) study. The study was directed by four research questions and four null hypotheses. Eight government-owned universities in the South-East that provide educational management programmes (3 federal and 5 state universities) participated in the study. The study used a survey research approach with a sample size of eight department heads. To evaluate the application of quality assurance procedures as they pertain to examination moderation, in-service professional development programmes, mock accreditation exercises, and infrastructure facilities, a 44-item researcher-constructed questionnaire was used. The study's main conclusions showed that the four mechanisms for quality assurance in the educational management programme were implemented to a limited level at both federal and state universities in the southeast. When compared to state institutions, the federal universities showed greater application of these mechanisms. The answers to the research questions support this. The report suggested that the National Universities Commission (NUC) give state universities more consideration while doing the standard general/main accreditation of schools. This will lessen any potential standard differences.

The instruments used to evaluate soft skills throughout the hiring process and those to help graduates build soft skills during their first years on the job were described in an exploratory study by Succi and Wieandt (2019). Five hundred (500) HR managers and 240 alumni of a European business school in Italy and Germany were each sent a symmetrical online survey. Results revealed that managers and graduates had varied perspectives on how soft skills development methods were used. Only 22% of students acknowledged they receive formal training, and only 26% claimed to be included in a performance appraisal process, compared to most of HR managers who said they offer formal training to recent graduates and that they participate in performance review sessions. A practical implication of this study is that it fills the existing gap on whose responsibility (higher education or companies?) to develop the soft skills of graduates. From the perspective of a banker, Bala and Singh (2020) investigated the employability skills of management students. The study included a sample of 95 officials, 45 of whom were from banks in the public and private sectors. The study's conclusions demonstrated that public sector bank officials value fundamental abilities such as decision-making, delegation, integrity, analysis, and perception. On the other hand, in the commercial sector, the emphasis is on novelty skills, trans-disciplinary skills, cognitive load management skills,

design mindset skills, and virtual collaboration skills. According to the study, educational institutions should help students build contemporary employability skills by setting up meetings with seasoned professionals who can help them comprehend the actual working conditions of their professions.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design of the survey type. The descriptive survey research design allowed the researchers to collect data that described internal quality assurance practices and employability skills of Educational Management graduates in public Universities in South-West, Nigeria. The target population for this study comprised of one thousand and thirty-six (1,036) final-year full-time Educational Management students of 9 public Universities in six states in South-West, Nigeria. The population of graduates in this study covered full-time 400-level students because they are considered as potential graduates of the Educational Management Department in the 9 public Universities in South-West, Nigeria. In addition, the choice of final year students as the target population of graduates in this study was because, the researcher considered students in this academic level as deemed employable, and the fact that data collection from alumni was difficult due to ethical considerations. The sample size for this study comprised 354 final year (400 level) students of Educational Management. The selection of this sample size was achieved through a multistage sampling procedure. A simple random sampling technique was used at the first stage to select six (6) public Universities (3 federal and 3 states) out of the nine (9) public Universities that have Educational Management undergraduates up to 400 levels. In the second stage, simple random sampling technique was adopted by the researchers for the selection of 50% of the 400-level Educational Management students in each of the selected universities.

Two researcher-developed instruments were used by the researchers for data collection. These instruments were tagged: Internal Quality Assurance Practices Questionnaire (IQAPQ) for Student, and Graduates Employability Skills Rating Scale (GESRS). The first instrument is divided into two parts. Part A was designed to collect demographic data of the respondents such as gender, university type, and nature of university. Part B is a 21-item questionnaire on students' involvement in internal quality assurance practices of a university adopted at the departmental level. It was designed to measure quality assurance practices in four areas of quality assessments: Curriculum Validation and Evaluation, Teaching and Learning Assessments, Graduate Skills Assessments, and Labour Market Assessments. The second instrument is a self-assessment rating scale with 53 items (25 positively worded items and 28 negatively worded items) which were psychological and attitudinal in nature and sought to know about Educational Management students' employability skills acquired in five areas. GESRS has nine-item statements for interpersonal communication skills, nine-item statements for self-management skills, ten-item statements for critical thinking skills, sixteen-item statements for management-specific skills, and nine-item statements for teacher professionalism skills. Each item of the two instruments was structured on a four (4)-point Likert response scale of "Strongly Agree" through "Strongly Disagree" and weighted as follows: Strongly Agree=4, Agree =3, Disagree =2, and Strongly Disagree =1.

The content validity of the two instruments was established through the expert opinions of three Professors of Measurement and Evaluation and Educational Management. The test-retest reliability method was used to establish their coefficients of stability. The coefficients of stability obtained were .81 for the Internal Quality Assurance Practices Questionnaire, and .70 for the Graduates Employability Skills Rating Scale. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Postgraduate College Board of Tai Solarin University of Education before the conduct of the survey. The two instruments were administered at the same time to respondents. Copies of the questionnaire were administered during the second semester of the 2021/2022 academic session. The collected data were

coded and analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Multiple Regression analysis procedures in SPSS statistical computer software program.

Results

The results obtained from the administration of the two instruments are presented below.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Respondents (Graduates, and Universities) Surveyed

Demographic Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	133	37.6
	Female	221	62.4
	Total	354	100.0
University type	Federal	3	50.0
	State	3	50.0
	Total	6	100.0
Nature of university	Conventional	5	83.3
	Specialised	1	16.7
	Total	6	100.0

Data presented in Table 1 showed that 37.4% of graduate respondents were males and 62.4% of graduate respondents were females. This result implied that most respondents were females. As regards the public Universities sampled, data showed that 50.0% of the universities were federal and 50.0% were state-owned universities. Data also revealed that 83.3% of the universities sampled were conventional in nature and 16.7% were specialised.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no correlation relationship between internal quality assurance practices (curriculum validation and evaluation, teaching and learning assessments, graduate skills assessments, and labour market assessments) and employability skills (interpersonal communication skills, self-management skills, critical thinking skills, management specific skills, and teacher professionalism skills) acquired by Educational Management graduates in public Universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Table 2

Correlation Matrix of the Relationship between Internal Quality Assurance Practices and Employability Skills

	Mean	S.D	N	CVE	TLA	GSA	LMA	ICS	SMS	CTS	MSS	TPS
CVE	13.50	2.831	354	1								
TLA	16.16	3.635	354	.442**	1							
GSA	14.00	2.489	354	.309**	.387**	1						
LMA	16.27	2.885	354	.098	.226**	.405*	1					
ICS	25.75	2.691	354	.191**	.245**	.277**	.414**	1				
SMS	25.00	2.670	354	.274**	-.047	.182**	.199**	.311**	1			
CTS	25.78	3.157	354	-.309**	-.126*	-.207**	-.087	-.010	.153**	1		
MSS	42.37	3.623	354	-.012	-.065	.049	.099	.066	.245**	.146*	1	
TPS	24.72	3.344	354	-.161**	-.072	-.071	.086	.204**	.347**	.373**	.454***	1

Note. n= Number of respondent (educational management graduates) sampled (n=354), S.D= Standard deviation score, degree of freedom (df)= 352. Decision rule: * p < .05, ** p < .01. CVE= Curriculum validation and evaluation, TLA= Teaching and learning assessments, GSA= Graduate skills assessments, LMA= Labour market assessments, ICS= Interpersonal communication skills, SMS= Self-management skills, CTS= Critical thinking skills, MSS= Management specific skills, TPS= Teacher pedagogical skills.

Table 2 revealed that curriculum validation and evaluation were positively and significantly correlated to interpersonal communication skills ($r = 0.191$, $p < 0.05$). Curriculum validation and evaluation were positively and significantly related to self-management skills ($r = 0.274$, $p < 0.05$). Curriculum validation and evaluation were negatively and significantly related to critical thinking skills ($r = -0.309$, $p < 0.05$). Curriculum validation and evaluation was not significantly related to management-specific skills ($r = -0.012$, $p > 0.05$). Curriculum validation and evaluation were negatively and significantly related to teacher professionalism skills ($r = -0.161$, $p < 0.05$). The results in Table 2 also indicated that teaching and learning assessments were positively and significantly related to interpersonal communication skills ($r = 0.245$, $p < 0.05$). Teaching and learning assessments were not significantly related to self-management skills ($r = -0.047$, $p > 0.05$). Teaching and learning assessments were negatively and significantly related to critical thinking skills ($r = -0.126$, $p < 0.05$). Teaching and learning assessments were not significantly related to management-specific skills ($r = -0.065$, $p > 0.05$). Teaching and learning assessments were not significantly related to teacher professionalism skills ($r = -0.072$, $p > 0.05$).

The results in Table 2 also revealed that graduate skills assessments were positively and significantly related to interpersonal communication skills ($r = 0.277$, $p < 0.05$). Graduate skills assessments were positive and significantly related to self-management skills ($r = 0.182$, $p < 0.05$). Graduate skills assessments were negatively and significantly related to critical thinking skills ($r = -0.207$, $p < 0.05$). Graduate skills assessments were not significantly related to management-specific skills ($r = 0.049$, $p > 0.05$). Graduate skills assessments were not significantly related to teacher professionalism skills ($r = -0.071$, $p > 0.05$). The results also showed that labour market assessments were positively and significantly related to interpersonal communication skills ($r = 0.414$, $p < 0.05$). Labour market assessments were positive and significantly related to self-management skills ($r = 0.199$, $p < 0.05$). Labour market assessments were not significantly related to critical thinking skills ($r = -0.087$, $p > 0.05$). Labour market assessments were not significantly related to management-specific skills ($r = 0.099$, $p > 0.05$). Labour market assessments were not significantly related to teacher professionalism skills ($r = -0.086$, $p > 0.05$). The above results mean that the null hypothesis three was rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant joint contribution of internal quality assurance practices to the employability of graduates of Educational Management in public Universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Table 3
Regression Model Summary Indicating the Joint Contribution of Internal Quality Assurance Practices to Employability Skills Acquired by Educational Management Graduates in Public Universities

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
.294	.086	.076	9.30366		
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Regression	71204.195	4	712.125	8.227	.000	Sig.
Residual	28538.381	349	86.558			
Total	99742.575	353				

a. Dependent Variable: Employabilitiy skills (of interpersonal communication skills, self-management skills, critical thinking skills, management specific skills and teacher professionalism skills)

b. Predictors: (Constant), IQA practices (curriculum validation and evaluation, teaching and learning assessments, graduate skills assessment and labour market assessment).

Table 3 showed that the regression model summary indicated that internal quality assurance practices jointly contributed significantly to the employability skills of Educational Management graduates in public Universities ($F_{4, 349} = 8.227$; $p < .05$). The adjusted R^2 indicated that 7.6% of the variance in employability skills acquired by graduates of Educational Management was as a result of the joint contribution of internal quality assurance practices (curriculum validation and evaluation, teaching and learning assessments, graduate skills assessment and labour market assessment). Therefore, null hypothesis two which stated that there is no significant joint contribution of internal quality assurance practices to the employability of graduates of Educational Management in public Universities in South-West, Nigeria was rejected. The result implied that a significant predictive power was present.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant relative influence of internal quality assurance practices (curriculum validation and evaluation, teaching and learning assessments, graduate skills assessments, and labour market assessments) on the employability of graduates of Educational Management in public Universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Table 3
Standardized Regression Coefficients Showing the Relative Influence of Internal Quality Assurance Practices on Employability Skills Acquired by Graduates of Educational Management

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	139.992	3.773		37.100	.000
Curriculum validation and evaluation	-.731	.198	-.214	-3.688	.000
Teaching and learning assessments	-.007	.160	-.003	-.045	.964
Graduate skills assessments	.129	.235	.033	.551	.582
Labour market assessments	.725	.189	.216	3.841	.000

Dependent Variable: Combined employability skills (of interpersonal communication skills, self-management skills, critical thinking skills, management specific skills, and teacher professionalism skills)

Results in Table 3 showed that the relative influence of curriculum validation and evaluation on employability skills acquired by graduates of Educational Management was significant ($\beta = -0.214$; $t = -3.688$; $p < 0.05$). The relative influence of teaching and learning assessments on employability skills acquired by graduates of Educational Management was insignificant ($\beta = -0.003$; $t = -0.045$; $p > 0.05$). The relative influence of graduate skills assessments on employability skills acquired by graduates of Educational Management was insignificant ($\beta = 0.033$; $t = 0.551$; $p > 0.05$). The relative influence of labour market assessments on employability skills acquired by graduates of Educational Management was significant at a .05 level ($\beta = 0.216$; $t = -3.841$; $p < 0.05$). In terms of their potency of predictive power, labour market assessments IQA practices ($\beta = 0.216$) showed more positive predictive strength compared to a negative Beta value of 0.214 for curriculum validation and evaluation IQA practices.

Discussion of Findings

This study was conducted to examine the relationship between internal quality assurance practices and the employability of graduates of Educational Management in public Universities in

South-West, Nigeria. Hypothesis one was analysed to test if there was a significant relationship between internal quality assurance practices (curriculum validation and evaluation, teaching and learning assessments, graduate skills assessments, and labour market assessments) and employability skills (interpersonal communication skills, self-management skills, critical thinking skills, management specific skills, and teacher professionalism skills) acquired by Educational Management graduates in public Universities in South-West, Nigeria. The result revealed a significant relationship between internal quality assurance practices and employability skills acquired by Educational Management graduates in public Universities in South-West, Nigeria. Thus, the null hypothesis one was discarded. This result means that the two study's main independent variables (internal quality assurance practices and employability skills) are significantly related.

Findings further showed that a significant positive relationship exists between curriculum validation and evaluation and interpersonal communication; between curriculum validation and evaluation and self-management skills; teaching and learning assessments and interpersonal communication skills; between graduate skills assessments and interpersonal communication skills; between graduate skills assessments and self-management skills; between labour market assessments and interpersonal communication skills; and between labour market assessments and self-management skills. This outcome implies that these internal quality assurance variables are associated with graduate skills. Findings also showed that a significant negative relationship exists between curriculum validation and evaluation and critical thinking skills; between curriculum validation and evaluation and teacher professionalism skills; between teaching and learning assessments and critical thinking skills; and between graduate skills assessments and critical thinking skills. This outcome implies that these internal quality assurance variables are not significantly associated with these skills.

This finding supported the findings of Boateng, Eghan, and Adu (2015), Ajayi and Ayanyemi (2016), Siyanbola (2016), Olujuwon et al (2020), and Sarker et al (2021). Boateng, Eghan and Adu (2015) showed that assurance of quality through curriculum delivery was strongly relevant to graduate job responsibilities, and 85% of the graduates were highly satisfied with quality assured curriculum. According to the study, even if graduates need generic skills to secure the qualities needed for employment, work will be useless without efficient quality assurance and auditing methods in place. Ajayi and Ayanyemi (2016) found that quality assurance strategies usage had a significant positive relationship with private participation in the development of public universities. Siyanbola (2016) showed that entrepreneurial skill-oriented higher education for human capital development is linked to improved employment chances. It was also revealed that higher education curriculum content correlates positively with the benefits of human capital development. Olujuwon et al (2020) found curriculum review was significantly correlated with the employability skills of tertiary institutions graduates. A study on students' perceptions of the value of developing soft skills for their employability was done by Sarker et al in 2021. There were discovered to be significant connections between communication, critical thinking, teamwork, and employability.

Hypothesis two was analysed to test if internal quality assurance practices (curriculum validation and evaluation, teaching and learning assessments, graduate skills assessment, and labour market assessment) jointly contributed significantly to employability skills (interpersonal communication skills, self-management skills, critical thinking skills, management specific skills, and teacher professionalism skills) acquired by graduates of Educational Management degree programme in public Universities in South-West, Nigeria. The result revealed a significant joint contribution of internal quality assurance practices to employability skills acquired by Education Management graduates. Thus, the null hypothesis two was rejected. This result means that the combined practices of curriculum validation and evaluation, teaching and learning assessments, graduate skills assessment, and labour market assessment can significantly contribute positively to graduates' interpersonal communication skills, self-management skills, critical thinking skills, management-specific skills, and teacher professionalism skills altogether.

Further examination of the regression analysis of this finding found that the proportion of variance (in a regression analysis of IQA factors that contributed to employability skills) accounted for small but a significant 7.6 percent. That suggested a significant predictive power was present. The rest of the variation in graduates' employability skills (92.4%) may be accounted for by other factors or variables that are beyond the scope of this study. The above finding is consistent with the findings of Knight and Yorke (2002), Allen and Van der Velden (2009), Edinyang, Odey and Gimba (2015), Oyebanji and Omojola (2018), and Ogbeche (2021) in their empirical studies. Oyebanji and Omojola (2018) who examined quality assurance factors as determinants of graduates' employability in the University of Ibadan and Lead City University found that quality assurance factors jointly and significantly contributed to graduates' employability. The result of their study showed that quality assurance factors could determine and predict graduate employability. Ogbeche (2021) who assessed internal and external quality assurance practices as determinants of institutional effectiveness of public universities found that internal quality assurance processes had a substantial influence on university institutional effectiveness. External quality assurance measures were also shown to have a significant influence on university institutional effectiveness. Edinyang, Odey, and Gimba (2015) discovered that academic discipline significantly influenced graduate employability.

Additionally, the REFLEX study (Allen & Van der Velden, 2009), which surveyed 70,000 higher education graduates from 16 countries, revealed that graduates from higher education studies are effectively prepared for working life in terms of their chances of finding employment and utilizing their knowledge and skills. Additionally, the REFLEX study discovered that functional flexibility, global experience, and work-related study experience throughout higher education were all positively correlated with graduates' employability. Other elements that have an impact on employability include study mode (full-time or part-time), location and mobility of the student, graduates' prior work experience, age, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class. Knight and Yorke (2002) stated that students should be entitled to experiences in the university that develop understandings, skills, self-theories, and reflection and that this good learning and education improves employability.

Hypothesis three was analysed to test if there was the relative influence of internal quality assurance practices (curriculum validation and evaluation, teaching and learning assessments, graduate skills assessments, and labour market assessments) on employability (interpersonal communication skills, self-management skills, critical thinking skills, management specific skills, and teacher professionalism skills) of graduates of Educational Management in public Universities in South-West, Nigeria. The result revealed a significant relative influence of internal quality assurance practices (curriculum validation and evaluation, and labour market assessments) on employability skills acquired by graduates of Educational Management in public Universities in South-West, Nigeria. Thus, the null hypothesis three was rejected. This result means that the two independent variables (curriculum validation and evaluation, and labour market assessments) can dependently and independently predict graduates' employability skills. In terms of their predictive strength, labour market assessments had more predictive power than the other three independent measures of internal quality assurance practices and were found to positively influence skills acquired by graduates. Curriculum validation and evaluation was next, however, this independent variable of internal quality assurance practices negatively predicted graduate employability skills.

The significant levels obtained for curriculum validation and evaluation (CVE), and labour market assessments (LMA) indicate that these two factors of internal quality assurance are linearly related. The regression weight associated with curriculum validation and evaluation practice means that the explanatory power of this variable is weak. Also, the regression weight associated with labour market assessment practice means that the explanatory power of this variable is weak. This implies that particular attention must be given to curriculum validation and evaluation and labour market assesment when it comes to enhancing the employability skills of Education Management graduates. The result is translated through the following linear regression equation:

$$Y = 140 - 0.214X_1 + 0.216X_2$$

$$Employability = 140 - 0.214\ CVE + 0.216\ LMA$$

This result can be interpreted as significant but with low predictability meaning that the strength of predictive validity of internal quality assurance practices in South-West, Nigeria is low. However, it suggests that internal quality assurance can be intensified to enhance employability. This result implies that internal quality assurance practices must be strengthened to enhance the employability skills of graduates of Educational Management. This finding is like the survey findings conducted by Martin (2018) who found that academic staff believed that programme evaluation and teacher monitoring were the most efficient ways to improve graduates' employability. Additionally, it was believed that course evaluation would improve graduate employability. Student competencies evaluation was deemed to have the largest influence on graduates' employability among the IQA tools specially created to improve employability. Employer participation in the adjustment of the study programme came next. Surprisingly, employability was not thought to be improved by graduate tracer studies and employer satisfaction surveys as well as other tools.

Also, Tendongmoh (2019) who determined the relationship between curriculum quality assurance and higher education graduates' employability discovered that curriculum quality assurance improved graduates' employability. Employers were never invited during curriculum conception, most of the students were dissatisfied with the present curriculum, and a majority of the respondents confirmed that the absence of employers from curriculum conception kills graduates' employability. Storen and Aamodt's (2010) study questioned how well universities are preparing their graduates for working life but found that study programme characteristics have a significant impact on the value of the programme in the working world. These researchers also discovered that vocationally oriented degree programme like as engineering, health, and law demonstrate a positive effect on employability compared with degree programmes such as humanities and social science which are not vocationally oriented programnes. In terms of the negative contribution of curriculum validation and evaluation to graduate employability skills, the current result disagreed with the findings of Olujuwon, Adeyanju, and James (2020), who investigated the relationship between tertiary education curricula and graduates' employability abilities in Lagos State, found that it was favourably connected with graduates' personal qualities, core skills, and process skills. Their analysis suggests that employability curriculum implementation tactics at tertiary institutions be strengthened.

Conclusion

This paper indicated empirical evidence in understanding how internal quality assurance practices have been institutionalised in promoting graduate employability in the context of public universities in South-West, Nigeria. From the analysed data and tested hypotheses, the study revealed that university internal quality assurance practices are significantly related to employability skills of graduates of Educational Management in public Universities in South-West, Nigeria. Key internal quality assurance practices that were instrumental in enhancing graduate skills from the findings of this study were curriculum validation and evaluation, and labour market assessments.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following:

1. The findings of this study suggest there should be a two-level integration of internal quality practice into the undergraduate degree programme of Educational Management. First, at the faculty or departmental level, academic staff, students and employers of Educational Management graduates with emphasis on their participation in curriculum validation and evaluation exercises, teaching and learning assessments, and graduate skills assessments. Second, at organisational level involving labour market assessments of Educational Management graduates.

2. Departments of Educational Management should recommend to University management the need for periodic review of the current curriculum of the Educational Management undergraduate degree programme to reduce the existing large negative skill gap in interpersonal communication skills, self-management skills, critical thinking skills, management-specific skills, and teacher professionalism skills that are highly demanded by employers in both public and private sectors of Nigeria's education system. Course contents related to these in-demand skills should be integrated into the curriculum of the Educational Management undergraduate degree programme.

3. Departmental internal quality assurance practice audit should be periodically conducted by Heads of Department alongside the academic staff of Educational Management to examine the current level of implementation of internal quality assurance practices that can enhance the employability skills of students of the department.

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