

Relationship between the Curriculum and Attributes of Nigerian Faculty of Education Graduates towards Teaching in Kwara State, Nigeria

David Jimoh Kayode; Nurahimah BtMohd Yusoff; & Arsaythamby Veloo⁵

University education in Nigeria has been recognized for its role in pertinent workforce training for the benefit of learners and the community. However, the role of university education in stimulating national economic growth and transformation exacerbates the need to ensure quality within the universities system. The quality and focus of the training offered by the Nigerian universities are not in tune with the needs of society which leads to high unemployment. Soludo (2012) stresses that the problem of unemployment in Nigeria is not because there are no jobs but because there are no competent graduates to do the jobs. This study examines the influence of faculty of education curriculum on the attributes of graduates produced. 12 public and private secondary schools in Kwara State were selected for this study. A total of 100 graduates of education teaching in secondary schools and 100 management members including heads of departments, vice principals and principals were selected for the study. The findings of the study show that the curriculum has a great influence on the quality of teachers produced in faculties of education in Nigerian higher education. Frequent review of teachers training curriculum was recommended.

Keywords: Curriculum, Faculty of Education, Graduates, Nigeria

University education in Nigeria has been recognized for its role in pertinent workforce training for the benefit of learners and the community (Agabi, Obasi, & Ohia, 2012; FRN, 2004). Currently, school systems around the world are focusing on students' achievement, empowering school leaders along with the curriculum and accountability frameworks (Gamage, Adams, & McCormack, 2009). The enormous pressure to become accountable and responding to customers' needs, calls for university institutions to become more effective, efficient and customer centric in their activities (Sahney, 2011; Sahney, Banwet, & Karunes, 2008). The role of University education in stimulating national economic growth and transformation exacerbates the need to ensure quality within the Universities system (Ebuara, 2012; Kim, 2009; Ndiyo, 2007; Ololube, Amaele, Kpolovie, Onyekwere, & Elechi, 2012). According to Okojie (2013), the quality and focus of the training offered by Nigerian universities are not in tune with the needs of the society which has led to high unemployment. According to the executive secretary of National University Commission (NUC) in Nigeria, many of the graduates are perceived to lack the skills needed by the employers of labour. In a study conducted by National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), it was revealed that large portion of the youth corps cannot write a good application letter or effectively communicate in the English language. This warrant the statement said by NYSC coordinator of Kano state, Mr. Sanusi AbdulRasheed to the passing out corps members that they should go and obtain primary and

⁵ Department of Educational Studies, School of Education and Modern Languages, Universiti Utara Malaysia, 06010 Sintok, Malaysia. Corresponding e-mail: daveitol@yahoo.com

secondary text books in order to learn the fundamentals of writing good application letters (Kawu, 2013). This has abrogated the assumption of University education that is important and basically an industry instituted to produce a quality workforce for national development (Arong & Ogbadu, 2010; Nkang, 2012; Puffer, 2005).

Etymologically, the term curriculum sprung from the latin word “Currere” which denotes a racecourse or a runway on which one runs to accomplish a goal (Yarriswamy, 2010). Every institution of learning has pre-determined goals to achieve through the teaching and learning process within and outside the classroom and to facilitate this process, we need a means which in educational terms is called curriculum. The curriculum according to Tyler (1949, 2010), is defined as all learning experiences which a learner is exposed to under the supervision of the lecturers. Therefore, the curriculum is a means by which lecturers realise their ideals or objectives in the classroom. Traditionally, curriculum meant to train the diverse abilities or faculties of the mind, with the help of discrete subjects included in it. This was very narrow in its approach because the courses were subject dominated, which had to be mastered by the student. However, the modern concept of curriculum is much broader both in its approach to the content of knowledge and also with regard to the needs and abilities of the learner as well as the changing needs of the society. Curriculum for any course of study must consist of some fundamentals of the subjects which are basic without which the higher details cannot be understood properly; these fundamentals are called the core curriculum in secondary school and foundational courses in higher education. Issues of quality have drawn the attention of all nations in the world through the process of popularization of university education. China for instance has taken measures to solve the problems of quality in their higher education by launching the construction and assessment of National Pilot Curriculum (NPC).

In Nigeria, concentration on curricular and pedagogy innovation is poor (Ogbogu, 2013). This is evident in the high dropout rate of students from universities as well as the poor quality of university graduates. Dabalén, Oni, and Adekola (2001) affirm that there is high increase of poorly trained university graduates and these deficiencies are in terms of written and oral communication as well as in practical technical expertise. They observe that the provision of education services is not market responsive and admission policies are not related to labour demand requirements. In developed countries, institutions adapt to the problem of labour market mismatch by forming knowledge alliances with different institutes that create knowledge in the country. In addition to this, the government launches additional vibrant labour market communication schemes that are connected to universities’ professional guidance and better participation of private sector in curriculum discussion, lecturers’ attachment, and research financing as well as student employment.

In Kpee, Oluwuo, and Baridam (2012), Nigerian universities curriculum are expected to have local content by stressing local values and home based cultural assets while accommodating and absorbing the Global Knowledge Economy (GKE) and technology (without adulterating the local content) to produce and support the development of the community and individuals as balanced local citizens. However, if the result of such curriculum is being put in place; it will make a university to develop a local person with an international outlook. According to Kpee et al. (2012), it is projected that the relevant curriculum for Nigerian universities should be one that develops the students’ intelligence to be in tune with the unique self, local and global environment. That is, the university curriculum should be able to develop students to be abreast with social, economic, cultural, political and technological needs of the world as a whole and the country in particular. As maintained by Cheng (2000, 2005), relevant curriculum must aim for the future and provide unlimited opportunities for students’ learning. This is what Cheng refers to as the “triplication of education” which is: individualization, localization and globalization. However, Uche and Kpe (2007), observe that most Nigerian universities professors are disconnected scholars making white elephant collar curricula used in several faculties and colleges which turns out of white elephant graduates whose qualifications cannot be defended in the labour market. According to Philip (2008), employability is a

curriculum issue and there are various ways of fostering employability through the curriculum. Some will fit some system and circumstances better than the others but the best approach is the one that is best in content. According to Philip, effective learning and employability intentions need to be supported by teaching, learning and assessment techniques that are consistent with the intentions of the curricula. (Aggarwal-Gupta & Vohra, 2010).

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between faculty of education curriculum and the attributes of graduates being produced. Specifically, the study intended to find out the perceptions of secondary school teachers in Kwara state on the curriculum of faculty of education. To examine the perceptions of HODs, vice principals and principals on the attribute of graduates being produced by teacher training schools; and study the relationship between teacher training curriculum and attributes of faculty of education graduates

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of the faculty of education graduates about the curriculum of Nigerian universities?
2. What are the perceptions of employers of teachers on the attributes of faculty of education graduates teaching in Kwara State?
3. To what extent does curriculum in Nigerian universities influence graduate attributes?

Research Hypotheses

H₁: The curriculum of faculties of education in Nigerian universities has a positive relationship to the basic skills and understanding of their graduates

H₂: The curriculum of faculties of education in Nigerian universities has a positive influence on the knowledge and intellectual ability of their graduates

H₃: The curriculum of faculties of education in Nigerian universities has a positive influence on the workplace skills and applied knowledge of their graduates

H₄: The curriculum of faculties of education in Nigerian universities has a positive influence on the personal and interactive skills of their graduates

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative survey research design to examine the relationship between faculty of education curriculum and graduate attributes of secondary schools in Kwara State. Two sets of questionnaires titled University Curriculum Questionnaire (UCQ) and Graduate Attribute Inventory (GAI), were adapted from Jenkins (2012) and Griesel and Parker (2009) respectively to gather information from faculty of education graduates teaching in secondary schools in Kwara State and their HODs, Vice principals as well as their principals. The UCQ were given to the teachers while the GAI were administered to the HODs, VP and the principals to assess the teachers that were given a copy of the UCQ in the selected secondary schools. The two instruments were standardized instrument with Cronbach alpha value that ranges from 0.69 to 0.88. However, face and content validity were carried out. Four copies of both instruments were given to experts in curriculum as well as measurement and evaluation to assess the suitability of the instrument as it usability in Nigeria context and some copies were later given to teachers, HODs, VPs and principals who were not part of the selected sample for the study. They were asked to go through the items and identify any ambiguous words in the instrument and final corrected copies were later administered.

Independent Variable

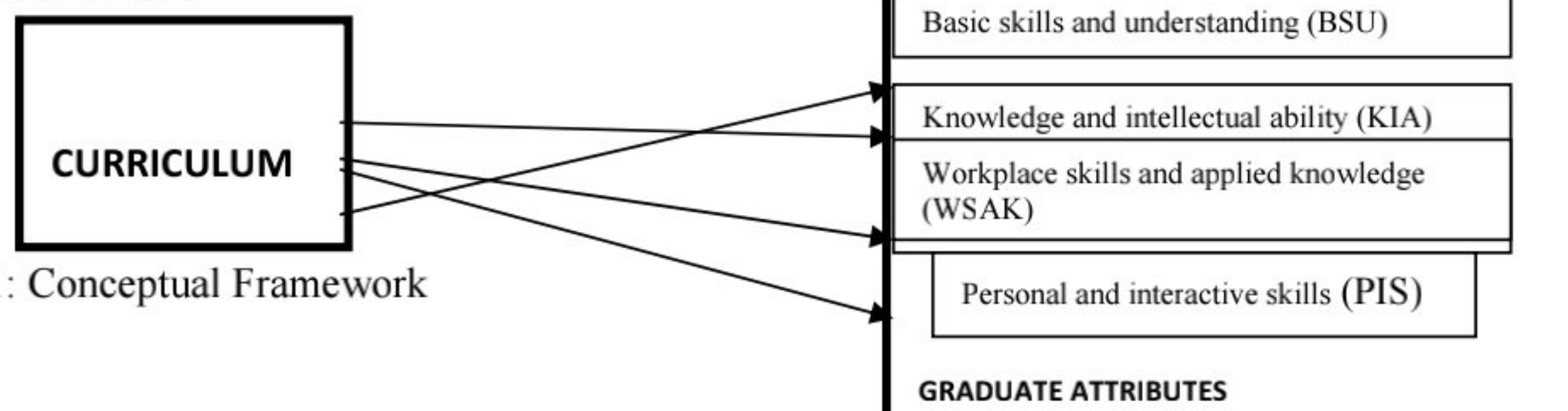


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework

Data Analysis

Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) version 20 was used to analyse research questions 1 and 2 while SmartPLS 2.0 (M3) was applied to test the hypotheses that were formulated. The SPSS was used to analyze the perceptions of faculty of education graduates about the university curriculum while the HODs, principals and employers perception about the attributes of faculty of education graduate was also analyzed using descriptive statistics. The smartPLS was also used to gather information on the pattern of relationship between the variables.

Findings

Construct validity and reliability was ensured through internal consistency reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity. This was revealed in Table 1 to Table 3. The AVE which according to Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2014) should be ≥ 0.5 , meet the criteria as all the AVEs are within the range 0.54 and 0.70. The composite reliability as well as the Cronbach Alpha was between the range 0.89 and 0.97 which are greater than the recommended value of 0.7. Therefore, the instrument are said to be valid and reliable.

Table 1
Result of reliability test

	Loadings	R Square	Cronbachs Alpha
BSU	0.781-0.905	0.8969	0.8957
CURRICULUM	0.739-0.860	0	0.8969
KIA	0.760-0.877	0.8837	0.8900
PIS	0.716-0.888	0.8211	0.8505
WSAK	0.879-0.954	0.8548	0.9191

Table 2
Discriminant validity (Latent Variable Correlation)

	BSU	CURRICULUM	GA	KIA	PIS	WSAK
BSU	1					
CURRICULUM	0.6688	1				
GA	0.8871	0.6651	1			
KIA	0.8477	0.6495	0.9671	1		
PIS	0.7081	0.5622	0.926	0.9115	1	
WSAK	0.7141	0.5684	0.8918	0.7818	0.7805	1

Table 3
Component-based factor loadings (Bolded) and Cross Loadings

	BSU	CURRICULUM	KIA	PIS	WSAK
BSU1	0.781	0.479	0.607	0.495	0.543
BSU2	0.884	0.615	0.776	0.622	0.552
BSU3	0.905	0.647	0.797	0.684	0.651
BSU7	0.796	0.496	0.657	0.548	0.660
CUR10	0.652	0.847	0.612	0.517	0.442
CUR11	0.405	0.739	0.387	0.337	0.515
CUR4	0.523	0.817	0.585	0.531	0.462
CUR6	0.625	0.860	0.593	0.497	0.508
CUR9	0.443	0.754	0.390	0.351	0.374
KIA1	0.743	0.524	0.807	0.671	0.528
KIA2	0.740	0.425	0.760	0.654	0.514
KIA3	0.591	0.523	0.855	0.852	0.713
KIA5	0.694	0.602	0.864	0.773	0.703
KIA7	0.780	0.614	0.877	0.823	0.775
PIS1	0.615	0.451	0.783	0.842	0.609
PIS2	0.647	0.359	0.709	0.716	0.497
PIS3	0.510	0.501	0.742	0.888	0.747
PIS5	0.602	0.545	0.797	0.869	0.731
WSAK1	0.610	0.583	0.758	0.796	0.902
WSAK2	0.558	0.425	0.563	0.554	0.879
WSAK3	0.645	0.524	0.737	0.761	0.954
WSAK4	0.733	0.493	0.731	0.680	0.852

Results

Research Question 1

What are the perceptions of the faculty of education graduates about the curriculum of Nigerian universities?

Table 4
Graduates' perception about faculty of education curriculum in Nigerian universities

S/N	Statement	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	The present curricular reflect what the students will come across after graduation	132	1	6	4.54	1.21
2	The curriculum is well designed and up to date	132	1	6	4.48	1.26
3	The curriculum integrates subject matter and high thinking skills	132	1	6	4.52	1.14
4	The curriculum content are situated in real world tasks	132	1	6	4.27	1.28
5	The curriculum is designed based on a variety of research	132	1	6	4.47	1.07
6	The curriculum is relevant to graduates seeking additional education in the same area.	132	1	6	4.15	1.30
7	The curriculum is relevant to graduates seeking employment.	132	1	6	4.20	1.22
8	The curriculum is relevant to graduates working in the field.	132	1	6	4.64	1.17
9	The curriculum is likely to enhance a high program graduation rate.	132	2	6	3.94	0.89
10	The curriculum is likely to lead to a high quality of instruction within the program.	132	1	6	4.57	1.06
11	The curriculum is likely to lead to a high quality assessment within the program.	132	1	6	4.33	1.15

From Table 4, it is seen that the faculty of education graduates perceived their universities curriculum to be helpful when seeking additional qualification, relevant to graduate seeking employment or graduate working in the field. The graduate teachers also perceived the faculty of education curriculum to be well designed and up to date; and it also reflects what the students will come across after graduation. The mean score of various items as shown in Table 4 are within the range 3.95 and 4.64.

Research Question 2

What are the perceptions of employers of teachers on the attributes of faculty of education graduates teaching in Kwara State? In order to answer research question 2 raised in this study, faculty of education attributes were expressed in four major components: basic skills and understanding; knowledge and intellectual ability; workplace skills and applied knowledge; and personnel and interactive skills. These are illustrated in tables 5-8.

Table 5
Employers' perception of basic skills and understanding possessed by faculty of education graduate in Kwara State

S/N	Statement	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Proficiency in English	132	1.00	6.00	4.53	1.11
2	Written communication skills	132	2.00	6.00	4.89	1.06
3	Oral communication skills	132	1.00	6.00	4.83	1.16
4	Understanding the world of work	132	1.00	6.00	4.27	1.35
5	Technical ability	132	2.00	6.00	4.61	1.16
6	Computer literacy	132	1.00	6.00	4.25	1.39
7	Ability to find and access information	132	1.00	6.00	4.52	1.09

As shown in Table 5, it is evidence that faculty of education graduates possess good written and oral communication skills; have the ability to find and access information; have technical ability

and they were computer literate. This shows that faculty of education graduate teaching in kwara state secondary schools have the basic skills and understanding required of their job.

Table 6

Employers' perception of knowledge and intellectual ability of faculty of education graduate in Kwara State

S/N	Statement	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Rapid conceptualization of issues	132	1.00	6.00	4.85	1.11
2	Ability to follow and construct logical argument	132	2.00	6.00	4.67	1.00
3	Understanding of core principles	132	2.00	6.00	4.52	1.08
4	General knowledge about local affairs	132	1.00	6.00	4.79	1.05
5	General knowledge about global affairs	132	2.00	6.00	4.44	1.13
6	Subject/discipline knowledge	132	2.00	6.00	4.84	1.18
7	Interest in ideals and desire to continue learning	132	2.00	6.00	4.89	1.21

The result in Table 6 indicate that faculty of education graduate teaching in Kwara State secondary schools possess the knowledge and intellectual ability needed in their job. These were judged by their employers, principals, vice principals and head of departments. The result shows that the faculty of education graduate teaching in Kwara State has the ability to follow and construct logical argument, have a rapid conceptualization of issues, possess general knowledge about local and global affairs, as well as having their various subject/discipline knowledge. It is also very interesting to note that the teachers have interest in ideals and desire to continue learning.

Table 7

Employers' perception of workplace skills and applied knowledge possessed by faculty of education graduates in Kwara State

S/N	Statement	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Understanding of changing workplace practice	132	1.00	6.00	4.18	1.32
2	Ability to recognize a problem situation	132	2.00	6.00	4.59	1.27
3	Ability to choose appropriate information to address problems	132	2.00	6.00	4.39	1.39
4	An appropriate approach to problem solving	132	3.00	6.00	4.55	1.06

As shown in Table 7, it is evident that faculty of education working in Kwara state secondary schools possess the workplace skills and applied knowledge needed by the schools. The result shows that the teachers understand the changing workplace practice, have the ability to recognize problem situations, have the ability to choose appropriate information to address problems as well as using appropriate approaches to problem solving.

Table 8

Employers' perception of personnel and interactive skills possessed by faculty of education graduate in Kwara State

S/N	Statement	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.Dev.
1	Sense of identity and self- confidence	132	1	6	4.77	1.19
2	Negotiation and mediation skills	132	2	6	4.59	1.06
3	Contribution to team building and work	132	2	6	4.41	1.10
4	Ability to relate to a wide range of people	132	3	6	4.98	0.87
5	Appreciation of different cultural contexts	132	2	6	4.48	1.14
6	Openness and flexibility	132	2	6	4.82	1.22

It is evident from table 8 that faculty of education graduates teaching in Kwara State secondary schools possess the personal and interactive skills needed by the secondary schools. This was revealed in the mean score of the six items listed to measure personnel and interactive skills. Their mean score was between 4.41 - 4.98.

Research Question 3

To what extent does curriculum in Nigerian universities influence graduate attributes?

Table 9
Path coefficients and hypothesis testing

Hypotheses	Relationship	Coefficient	t-value	Decision
H1	CURRICULUM -> BSU	0.6703	11.178	Supported
H2	CURRICULUM -> KIA	0.6522	11.2157	Supported
H3	CURRICULUM -> PIS	0.5657	8.432	Supported
H4	CURRICULUM -> WSAK	0.5706	9.4204	Supported

Discussion

This study explored the influence of curriculum on graduate attributes. The findings of the study imply that curriculum has a positive and significant relationship with the attributes of faculty of education graduates. This research work has three significant contributions to the body of knowledge. Firstly, it highlights the relevancy of faculty of education curriculum to graduate of education teaching in secondary schools. Secondly, the study reveals the attributes of faculty of education graduates teaching in secondary schools. Thirdly, the study helps to reveal how related is the current faculty of education curriculum to graduate attributes. Three research questions were raised in this study. The first research question explored the perceptions of the graduate on the faculty of education curriculum. It was revealed that graduates working in their field of study (Education) perceive the curriculum in school to be effective and up to date. This is in line with Gwany (2007) who stated that the program and curricula of higher education are designed to produce high level manpower for the labour markets in an economy. The second research question examined the attributes of faculty of education graduates. It was revealed that the faculty of education graduates teaching in Kwara state secondary schools possess the basic skills and understanding; have the knowledge and intellectual abilities; possesses workplace skills and applied knowledge; and have the personnel and interactive skills needed in secondary schools. The result of these findings was contrary to Okojie (2013), Dabalen et al., (2001) and Okebukola (2005). This may be because, the research of Okojie (2013) was on higher education but this study only focuses on faculty of education graduates that pass through the university system. It may also be because other teachers that do not pass through faculty of education were involved in previous research. Therefore, appointment of teachers who are not trained by faculty of education may be a contributory factor to poor teachers attributes as observed in previous studies.

The result of the study supports the motion that graduates' perception of faculty of education curriculum is positively and significantly related to graduate attributes as perceived by managers, HODs and employers of teachers in Kwara state secondary schools. From the statistical results, it is shown that there is a positive and significant relationship between faculty of education curriculum and attributes of faculty of education graduates ($\beta=.529$, $p<0.01$). The findings further demonstrated that the curriculum as a construct was positively and significantly related to each component of graduate attributes (basic skills and understanding; knowledge and intellectual skills; workplace skills and applied knowledge; and personal and interactive skills). Four operational alternate hypotheses were tested. The first alternate hypothesis which stated that faculty of education curriculum has a positive and significant relationship on the basic skills and understanding of its graduate was supported ($\beta=.562$, $p<0.01$). The second alternate hypothesis which stated that faculty of education curriculum has a positive and significant relationship on graduate knowledge and intellectual ability was also supported ($\beta=.507$, $p<0.01$). The third alternate hypothesis which stated that faculty of education curriculum has a positive and significant relation on graduate workplace skills and applied knowledge ($\beta=.474$, $p<0.01$). The fourth alternative hypothesis which stated that the curriculum of faculty of education has a positive and significant relationship on the personal and interactive skills of its graduate was supported ($\beta=.458$, $p<0.01$).

Conclusion and Recommendations

There is no doubt that the faculty of education curriculum (development, design and implementation) with other factors determines the quality of graduates. Therefore, the curriculum of the university system most especially that of the faculty of education; should not be compromised. As shown in this study, it becomes pertinent that employers of teachers to secondary schools by both private and public enterprise should always take into consideration the professional qualification of candidates as these will affect their job performances. This study focuses on faculty of education graduates and therefore, it is suggested that further study should be conducted to focus on other disciplines with respect to the institutional type, as this will help the educational administrators, policy makers and stakeholders to identify areas of concern in the educational system with regards to quality of graduates

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