Original Research Article

Competency improvement needs of graduates to overcome constrains in computer and internet application in their enterprises in Kogi State, Nigeria

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This study focused on the Competency Improvement Needs of Graduates to overcome constrains in Computer and Internet Application in their Enterprises in Kogi State, Nigeria. The survey design was used to carry out the study which was conducted in Kogi state using a selected population of 74 graduates engaged in enterprises that require the use of computer and internet. Two research questions guided the study. A 14 item questionnaire was developed and validated by three experts in the Unit of Computer Education of the Department of Vocational Teacher Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The Cronbach alpha method was utilized to determine the reliability of the instrument which yielded an alpha coefficient of 0.86. Weighted Mean and Competency Improvement Needs Index (CINI) were used to answer the research questions. It was found out that graduates engaged in enterprises that require the application of computer and Internet require improvement in the Application of Computer and Internet for success in their workplace. It was recommended that graduates requiring competencies in application of Computer and Internet be properly empowered for global challenges in their workplace through workshops.

Key words: Competency, improvement, computer, internet, Kogi, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The application of computer and internet by graduates in any enterprise is very crucial to the success of the enterprise. An enterprise according to Hornby (2004) is a business company or a firm. In this study, an enterprise is any business outfit engaged in by graduates and managed by them for profit.

A graduate according to Hornby (2004) is someone that has received a degree from a school (high school or college or university). In relevance to this study, graduates are individuals who have received training in a recognized university and are awarded a certificate of that institution. These graduates require the use of computer and internet to facilitate the efficiency of their enterprises. The computer according to Olaitan and Dada (2009) is described as an electronic device which consists of a central processing unit (CUP), a monitor, a keyboard and a mouse or touch pad with the following functions.

- Imputing, processing and storing data and information.
- Retrieving the stored information through downloading and printing.
- Manipulating data in order to achieve the desired objectives of the enterprise.

The internet cannot function effectively without the computer in managing information and making the information available to those that require it around the world. These graduates require computer and internet in order to reach the world about issues concerning their enterprises such as demand and supply. In this process they are usually confronted with some technology constrains occurring from computer or internet malfunctioning which hindered free flow of input and retrieval of information beyond the doorsteps of a businessman. For the graduates to overcome these
constrains, they require training in some competencies in the use of trouble free computer and internet. Competency according to International Labour Organization Report (2003) is the knowledge, capabilities and behaviour which someone exhibits in doing his job and which are factors in achieving the set objectives pertinent to the enterprise. In relevance to this study, competency is the knowledge, skills and attitude which the graduates require in order to overcome the constrains in computer and internet application in enterprises in Kogi state.

Statement of the problem

In Kogi state, the researchers observed that graduates engaged in enterprises experience a great deal of difficulties in overcoming constrains of computer and Internet application in their enterprises. These have some negative effects on the promotion of their businesses and margin of profit. It is the view of the researchers that if these competences are identified and packaged into a retraining programme for these graduates, it could go a long way to reduce their stress and improve their profit margin. It was in the light of this that the researchers identified the competencies which they should acquire to overcome constrains of computer and internet usage.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was therefore to identify areas in the application of computer and internet where graduates find difficult and to identify areas where they require competencies for improvement for success in their enterprises. Specifically, the study identified constrains in the application of computer and internet that hinder effective operation of graduates in employment.

The level to which the graduates could cope with constrains in the application of computer and internet in their enterprises.

Research questions

The following research questions therefore guided the study.

i) What constrains in application of computer and internet hinder effective operation by graduates in business enterprises?

ii) To what level do graduates overcome constrains in application of computer and internet in business enterprises.

METHODOLOGY

The survey design was adopted for the study. This design according to Olaitan, Ali, Eyo and Sowande (2000) is a plan, structure and strategy that the investigator wants to adopt in order to obtain solution to research problems using questionnaire in collecting, analyzing and interpreting data.

The study was carried out in Kogi State. The state is situated in the middle belt of Nigeria with abundant entrepreneurial activities embarked upon by graduates. The population of the study was purposively selected. It constituted 74 graduates who were engaged in business enterprises in the state. Due to the manageable size of the population, the entire population was studied hence no sampling technique was adopted.

A 14 item identified problem area questionnaire developed by the researchers was utilized in two categories. In the first category, the respondents were expected to indicate whether the identified constrain is posing problem to them or not in computer and internet application. Their responses was on a four point scale of High problem; Average problem; Little problem and No problem. In the second category, the respondents were to indicate the level they could cope with the constrain using four response mode of High coping; Average coping; Low coping and No coping. In this category, Competency Improvement Need Index was used to compare with the mean score of 2.50 (expected mean).

The instrument for data collection was faced validated by three experts in the unit of Computer Education of the Department of Vocational Teacher Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach alpha which yielded a coefficient of 0.86 and was thus utilized in data collection.

The instrument was administered to the respondents twice at their Association’s monthly meeting to ensure that all the respondents the instrument. At the second administration, the respondents who were attended to in the first instance were excluded from responding the second time. The administration was done twice because not all the graduates were at the meeting when the instrument was first administered.

Weighted means were used to analyze the data to answer the research questions using Competency Improvement Need Index (CINI) to obtain the Competency Improvement Gap (CIG) with the formula:

\[ CIG = EX - OX \]

Where CIG = Competency Improvement Gap

\[ EX = Expected\ Mean \]
\[ OX = Observed\ Mean \]

Decision rule:

Where CIG is negative (-) means that no improvement is needed

Where CIG is zero (0) means no improvement needed

Where CIG is positive (+) means improvement needed

RESULTS

The data for answering research question 1 are presented in Table 1 below. The data in Table 1 above revealed that the mean response of the respondents on the 14 items were above 2.50 which indicated that the respondents agreed
that the 14 trouble areas identified in Table 1 hindered their application of computer and internet for effective operation in their enterprises.

The data for answering research question 2 were presented on Table 2 below. The result in Table 2 revealed that the CIG were all positive. These values indicated that the graduates require improvement to cope with all constrains in the application of computer and internet in their enterprises.

Discussion of results

It was found that the graduates agreed that all the constrains identified in this study hindered them in the effective application of Computer and Internet in their enterprises. It was also found out that these graduates require improvement in all the items in order to cope with the constrains in applying Computer and Internet in their enterprises.

The result of this study is in agreement with the findings of Poon and Swatman (1997) in their study on Small Business Use of the Internet: Findings From Australian Case Studies. The findings of the study reveal that the managers of these small Businesses required some skills in the use of the Internet for success in their businesses. The findings of this study also agreed with Chau (2003) in his study on "The Use of E-Commerce Amongst Thirty-Four Australian SMEs: An Experiment or a Strategic Business Tool. The findings of this study were that the managers of these SMEs encountered some problems in their use of Computer and Internet in their enterprises. The findings of the Authors cited above helped to validate the result of this study.

Conclusion

The results of the study revealed that the respondents required improvement in the application of Computer and
Internet in coping with their businesses.

**Recommendation**

1. It is recommended that the findings of this study be developed into a competency improvement programme for graduates in businesses to help them overcome these identified constraints through workshops and seminars.
2. It is also recommended that every student be exposed to rudimentary computer application during their period of training in order not to encounter these constraints in their world of work.

**REFERENCES**


