

Constraints to Effective Assessment of Soft Skills in Sub-Saharan Africa

Dr. Obinna, M.O.¹, Adewuni, S.O.² and Dr. Taiwo, M.B.³
National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB)
P.M.B. 1747, Benin City, Nigeria

Tel: (+ 234 8038789833)¹; (+234 8033819883)²; and (+234 8101028311)³
E-mail: celnna@yahoo.com¹; solesey@gmail.com²; and mbtaiwo@yahoo.com³

Abstract

Assessment of soft skills has become a contemporary issue and thus attracted the attention of public examining bodies and other stakeholders in education. This paper addressed the perceived constraints to effective assessment of soft skills in Sub-Saharan Africa. It proffered solutions to these identified constraints in order to effectively and efficiently carry the integration for improved quality education. The paper also suggested the levels of soft skills to be assessed at primary, post-primary and tertiary educational institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa. Being a conceptual work, the paper made a critical review of relevant literatures on the subject matter and advanced the prospects of successful implementation of soft skills assessment in Sub-Saharan Africa educational system.

Keywords: Soft Skills, Curriculum Review, Certification, Soft Skills Categorisation and Re-training

Introduction

Nearly every developing country has identified improving education quality as one of its highest national priorities. In spite of progress in attending to the demand for increased education access, developing more effective national planning and policy mechanisms and implementing massive training programmes for teachers and administrators, dissatisfaction persists with the capability of education systems to support national economic and social aspirations. To some extents, plans and policies calling for higher-quality schooling now supplement or even replace earlier attention to such priorities as education expansion and school access. It would be seen that a consensus is forming that immediate attention of policy makers and involved international agencies should be focused on designing and implementing policies, programmes and actions to improve education quality. Translating the growing consensus into viable policies is a major challenge.

What is Soft Skills?

‘Soft skills’ is a sociological term relating to a person’s Emotional Intelligence Quotient. They are personal attributes that enhance an individual’s interactions, Job performance and career prospects. Soft skills are also known as Generic skills, key skills, common skills, essential skills, Employability skills, basic skills, competencies skills and transferable skills. Crosbie (2005) had listed the eight soft skills that are needed by all individuals: collaboration/teamwork, communication skills, initiative, leadership ability, people development/coaching, personal effectiveness/personal mastery, planning and organizing, and presentation skills. Carre (2000) has reported in his research findings that soft skills can be presented in four broad areas of management skills namely management of self, management of others, management of task and management of information. Soft skills are identified to be the most critical skill in the current global Job market especially in this fast moving era of technology.

Role of soft skills in ensuring quality education

Soft skills can be said to incorporate all aspects of generic skills that include the cognitive elements associated with non-academic skills. Soft skills are identified to be the most critical skills in the current global job market especially in a fast moved era of technology. The reorientation of education which is one trust of education for sustainability also relates the role of those so called soft skills (Vishal, 2009).

Vast research and expert opinions have been sought in the effort to determine the specific soft skills to be implemented and used in higher institutions of learning. Attempting to show the role of soft skills in ensuring quality in education, Vishal (2009) identified seven soft skills which are classified as “Must Have Sub-skills” and “Good to Have Sub-skills”. These include communicative skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills, team work, life-long learning & information management skill, entrepreneurship skill, ethics, moral & professional skill, and leadership skill.

In these uncertain economic times, the rapidly changing labor market–driven by a fluid and global economy creates a need for students to be more highly skilled and versatile than ever before. Collins (2001) noted that great companies foster a corporate culture that cultivate talent by promising employees and teaching them the discipline of work, problem-solving and leadership. Such companies emphasize soft skill rather than specific knowledge, skills or experience. Friedman (2006) elaborated that employees need a host of skills that are not traditionally taught in schools. He asserts that qualities such as innovation, the ability to navigate and shift through large amount of information, and the ability to synthesize disparate ideas into new solutions becomes highly required workplaces today. Hence, the role of our educational system needs to shift from knowledge transfer to knowledge filter.

The issue of employability of graduates has become very serious issue in Nigeria and beyond. The biggest challenge facing higher learning is to develop employable skills, enhance knowledge and make local graduates more attractive to employers. Empirical studies on work found soft skills such as leadership, communication, team building and entrepreneurial interest to have become critical for hiring and promoting employees to key positions (Audibert and Jones,

2002). A study by Berclow (1998) indicated that the competencies students need to develop in order to enhance their employability are self-management: communication, managing people and tasks; mobilizing innovation and change. In a survey of 400 employers on their perception of workplace basic skills and competencies required for current and potential employees, the employers said that they want entry-level workers to possess employability skills rather than technology competencies, and the most important to these employers (rating over 92.63) were basic skills, thinking skills, personal skills, and interpersonal competencies (Richens and McClain 2000).

Muir (2004) found that soft skills are the essential tools enabling employees to contribute to their fullest while Wilhelm (2002), disclosed that employers assert that for many high school and college graduates do not possess the skills necessary to contribute productively in their jobs without extensive employer training. Soft skills are important in virtually every profession especially while working with others. Therefore, when evaluating candidates, organizations will look for someone who has good people skills and is a team player.

Curriculum Development/Revision as an Approach to Integrating Soft Skills in Assessment into Public Examining

Curriculum Development is one of the key factors related to meaningful and successful program improvement. Curriculum development can be defined as the systematic planning of what is taught and learned in university as reflected in courses of study and University programs. These curricula are embodied in official document called curriculum “guides” for lecturers and diligently being implemented by each academic department. The development of curriculum structure is based on Rioz’s Model which have three stages, firstly curriculum foundation, curriculum content, and curriculum evaluation.

Curriculum Foundation

Curriculum foundations are the components that influence and control the content and organization of the curriculum. These components include definition of the program area, rationale for the study of the program area, content structure, program aim and program goals. They are based upon values one has developed pertaining to knowledge, society, learning, and the individual. Suraya (2003) posits that soft skills such as communication language, analytical thinking, learning to learn, Information Communication Technology (ICT), numerical competency, entrepreneurship and character building should be inculcated to the students through the integration of these skills across the curriculum.

Curriculum Content

Curriculum content includes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes (values) which educators are interested in conveying to learners. It is the second major category of curricular elements. The content focuses upon the specific information to be transmitted and the means of transmission in this category are the scope, sequence and unit specifications. The unit specifications may be

further divided into goals, rationales, objectives, activities and references. In general, the content elements provide direction for organizing curriculum content and for transmitting it to learners.

Curriculum evaluation

The end input of curriculum element is evaluation. It exists for two primary purposes. It ventures to assess whether the learners are achieving the content goal set forth in curriculum and if the curriculum is doing its work, which reflects its content validity.

Nigerian education system is yet to take a proactive strategy based on the unemployment studies and reports available by undertaking a curriculum revision in order to embed soft skills in all the courses of learning in the programs offered by the University. The revision of curriculum will create awareness and provide the guidelines for academic staff to implement soft skills in their teaching and thus enhance the learning process of the students.

Incorporating Co-Curriculum Component as an approach to integrating Soft Skills in Assessment

Co-Curriculum activities involves programs and activities that are created, developed and implemented to support soft skills either directly and or indirectly through co-curriculum activities, the students are able to gain a physically and spiritually balanced and holistic education and the end result will be a more matured and confident student. In all, co-curriculum development in Nigeria educational sector will help to:

- inculcate leadership qualities, staff discipline, organizational skills and teamwork.
- provide opportunities for students to discover and develop their talents.
- nurture the spirit of cooperation and unity.
- provide opportunities for active participations in high performance and mass sports amongst student.

A variety of co-curriculum activities are offered and these can be uniform activities, sports activities, cultural activities, leadership component and martial.

Arts activities: A maximum of one unit/credit hour should be allocated for co-curriculum courses with the objective of producing holistic and versatile graduates.

Uniform activities: Uniform activities give more opportunities for students to develop their talents and skills through efficient networking with outside organizations. These activities also encourage students to lead a more active lifestyle through teamwork activities. In addition, Uniform activities inculcate responsibility and leadership practices in students with the intended outcome of producing citizens that are mature, patriotic and rational.

Sports activities: Sport and physical fitness are considered as preparation for a healthy and active life. Students are encouraged to participate in a variety of sport activities such as football, hockey, netball and scuba diving.

Cultural activities: Cultural activities provide a holistic performing arts education towards producing a skilled and enlightened workforce who are aware of the unique and diverse population of Nigeria.

Leadership of Nigeria

Students can participate in these courses where they are trained on skill such as leadership, team work, problem solving and public speaking. This course can develop their talent and preparation for life after university and give them a more competitive aged in their career development.

Sea survival skills

The main objective of this program is to expose essential survival skills to the students. Through this activity the students are trained to survived by learning skills to build shelters, gather food, make fires, and travel without the aid of standard navigational devices. Through this program students learn to manage and survive life threatening circumstances.

Industrial Attachment/Training

Industrial attachment refers to work experience that is relevant to professional development prior to graduation. Industrial attachment helps in developing an awareness of general workplace behavior and interpersonal skills.

World culture Courses

This course exposes students to global knowledge, language skills and significant international experience. It is basically an electronic interactive learning that offers students a study on world cultures, societies, and countries via virtual and collaborative dialogue and discussion with partners from other regions in face to face environment without having to leave their classroom. This main objective of this program is to engage partners through lecture exchanges, joint courses, and international research. The cultural exchange is based both on written communications between pairs of students (via chatting and combined assignments) as well as through web-streamed face to face dialogue.

Theories of Soft Skills

Soft skills like leadership, decision-making, conflict resolution, negotiation, communication, creativity and presentation skills are essential for entrepreneurial success and for maximizing human capital in any enterprise. When balanced with a good management team and an effective human resource management system, soft skills provide a way to get the highest return on the investment in terms of human capital. While professional skills may open the door of opportunity soft skills keep you in the driver's seat.

Peter (1990), one of the foremost management thinkers of today and the culture of the fifth Discipline States, in a recent interview with the authors, that he has found a tremendous alignments between the basic ideas of organizational leaving and Africa Culture. This could be a “discontinuous, big opportunity for the 21st century” and African entrepreneurs are uniquely

poised to take advantage of this opportunity to make a difference. When rooted in their culture and norm, African entrepreneurs can make a difference developing a different approach to capitalism that respects natural capital, social capital and human capital in addition to financial capital. This is where the value differentiation can be made if you choose to pay attention.

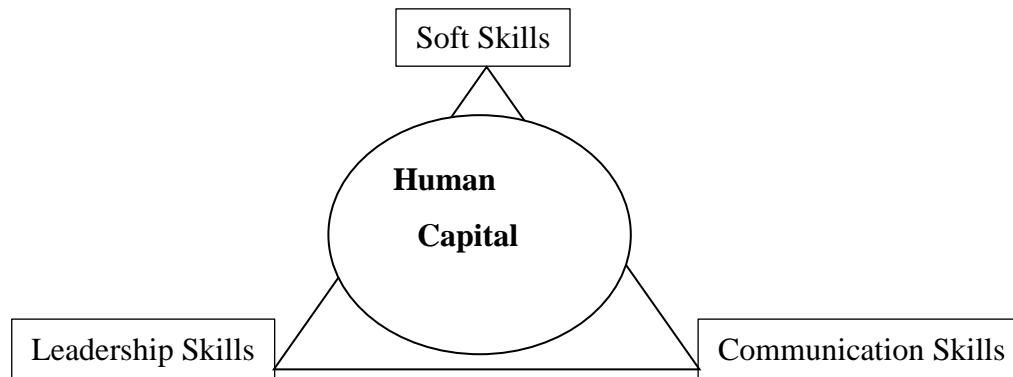


Fig. 1

Source: Authors, 2015.

Fig. 1 is an approach to maximize the students' capacity by balancing the focus on important soft skills.

Need for soft skills assessment in public examining.

The need for soft skills assessment cannot be over emphasized. Many countries of the world, Ireland, Central Texas, Malaysia, Taiwan, etc, have embraced soft skills assessment based on implementation strategies employed by individual country to ascertain the effects on the workforce and the economic development of the nation. In pursuit of strong and dynamic economy through quality education, Nigeria needs to join the rest of the world by introducing assessment of soft skills into her public examining.

The integration of soft skills into the national curriculum (Lee and Lee, 2011) indicates an indispensable role they play in building a virile economy through man capital development. Hence, the global trend in the workforce structure calls for urgent intervention by educational assessors to incorporate an assessment strategy that will enable the future 'job-seekers' be informed and prepared to face the challenges of the contemporary society.

Educational Assessment is a value judgment to ascertain to what extent a nation has been able to achieve its educational objectives both in quantity and in quality. If soft skills have therefore been identified as veritable tools needed for increasing productivity, enabling employee meets the employer's demand, creating an environment conducive for total human development, then a deliberate effort is required to include its assessment in the public examining.

The current emphasis on soft skills development has led to the introduction of a new curriculum where this concept gains prominence. It thus implies that for any form of assessment to be valid and reliable both in content and in delivery it must take into consideration every

aspect of the curriculum. Whether the implementation takes embedded or stand-alone models, it becomes imperative to form a part in Educational Assessment and Evaluation (Yassin, Hasan, Amin, & Amiruddin, 2008).

One of the end products of public examining is certification. The recent premium places on acquiring soft skills at all levels of education, therefore, demands for assessment and certification (Lee & Lee, 2011). This is to ensure that teaching and learning activities bring about the desired goal and objectives of integrating soft skills into the curriculum.

Previously, the concept of soft skills was viewed with passivity and as such considered immeasurable. But the recent development has shown that even though it is an innate, latent ability, yet they are cognitive elements associated with non-academic skills that can be taught learnt and measured like any other mental skills hence needs to be included in the public examining.

Challenges of Effective Assessment of Soft Skills

- ***Challenge of Curriculum Development:*** With the emergence of new technologies coupled with globalisation problems, it is evident to note that contemporary issues of the day among such as soft skills for workforce and their attendant effects are at alarming rate. Without mincing words, the present curricula for most African educational system have not accommodated the issue of soft skills for job opportunities for graduates. The problem of soft skills assessment depends on the nature, needs and contents to be incorporated at each level of educational system – primary, secondary and tertiary levels. At each level of educational system therefore, there is need for categorisation of contents.
- ***Challenge of infrastructural and instructional materials:*** Lack of Infrastructural materials such as soft skills laboratories with furniture electricity, water and toilet facilities amongst other may pose challenges for the effective assessment of soft skills. Similarly, students who are carrying out practical works and assignments where instructional materials are lacking in the form of audio tapes, video tapes, learning aids, video games among others for oral and written communications cannot be effectively assessed for effective assessment of soft skills various levels of educational sectors, there will be a need for adequate infrastructural and instructional materials.
- ***Challenge of Finance:*** Education as one of the prime sector for capacity building of any nation requires adequate finance for quality education. The challenge of finance to meet the demand for procuring new technologies for assessment practices of soft skills in various educational sectors is an issue of concern. It is disheartening to note that there are cases of families that cannot afford the cost of sending their children to schools and thus providing necessary materials for them. With the advent of soft skills assessment in schools, the cost of procuring new technologies for assessment might not be totally financed by the government except other educational stakeholders are involved.

- ***Challenge of Political Will:*** Most African countries are controlled by different political ideologies. Without adequate knowledge and understanding of the concept, nature, needs and contents involved in soft skills by those in the government to accept budget for implementation of any new curriculum developed for soft skills may be neglected or totally disapproved. In such a situation, assessment of soft skills will definitely be jeopardized.
- ***Challenge of Policy Makers:*** Without adequate information and good understanding about soft skills and its attendant effects among policy makers, the need for assessment of soft skills might be a waste of time, energy and money. From an old saying “failing to plan is planning to fail”. A building without solid foundation will lead to wasteful exercise without any remedy. Hence, policy makers should be knowledgeable and broad minded about the issue of soft skills.
- ***The Challenge of Test Developers and Assessors:*** Inadequate instruments for assessment of soft skills will lead to poor results where construction development and validation of instruments for assessing soft skills are not thoroughly done due to lack of knowledgeable test developers. Assessment of soft skills will surely be faulty and inaccurate when there are no knowledgeable assessors to assess students who are to make use of the instrument. There is need for well versed test developers and assessors in the issue of soft skills.
- ***Leadership & Supervision Styles:*** Leadership and supervision styles are avenues for assessing administrative acumen of any manager or administrator in a school system, for instance, an autocratic or a laissez-faire school administrator will exhibit deferent leadership and supervision styles.
In an environment where a democratic leader frowns at nonchalant attitudes to work, a laissez-faire school administrator may not see any wrong in such behaviours simply because as a leader he has not seen a role model. Assessment of soft skills for job performance in terms of punctuality commitment to duty, unattractiveness among others from laissez-faire leader may be inadequate and faulty.
- ***Challenge of implementation:*** Implementation of a policy or a programme with poor knowledge and understanding will definitely, mar the assessment of such policy or programme for instance, a teacher in the school with lack of adequate knowledge and understanding of soft skills will assess hi/her students negatively. In the same vein unscrupulous supervisors, invigilators and monitoring officers of examinations will surely discredit the beauty expected of such assessment instruments.
- ***Challenge of Poor Self Concept:*** As each individual is uniquely made with potentialities, any student that has poor self-concepts for instance, will lose focus and direction toward achievable goals for life ambition. This implies that the true assessment of such students will be difficult to identify and place on a platter of gold of global job assessment. Success is a state of mind and when an individual sees himself/herself as being inferior or incapacitated; to perform effectively will be difficult. Such impression for long trend can

lead to becoming liabilities to the community they find themselves for instance, the issue of girls education in some cultures is taken with levity; instead, parents in such cultures focus on the education of the male children at the expense of the females. Their intentions remain that whatever becomes girls' education will end up in the kitchen.

- ***Challenge of Environmental Maladjustment:*** The issue of nurture in the development of personalities requires much concern. Whatever good the nature brings, an individual in a poor environment can be badly influenced by social vices of the day. Among such are sexual immorality, theft, human trafficking, abductions, bribery and corruption as products of poor environmental experiences. There are cases of immoral acts found in some individuals with a defence mechanism that lack of job opportunities let them to such acts. Surprisingly, when cared and catered for, the potentialities in them which can be regarded as "soft skills" are well exhibited and appreciated. Assessment of soft skills therefore, due to environmental maladjustment is an issue of concern.
- ***Challenge of Cultural Diversity:*** Unlike a unitary state, Nigeria is multidimensional in cultural backgrounds therefore the issue of cultural barrier is another challenge to assessment of soft skills. What is a man's meat is another man's poison. For instance the issues of body language as means of non-verbal communication differ in meanings from culture to culture. Assessment of soft skills in school situations might pose some challenges.
- ***Large Size:*** Overcrowding in a class leads to population pressure. A rule of thumb stated that a manageable size of 30 to 40 students in a class gives room easy teaching and learning processes as well as good assessment of the students. Where students are overcrowded there will be rowdiness, impatience poor class management amongst others for a teacher under such conditions. Assessment of soft skills in a large class of students will pose a challenge.
- ***Challenge of Loco Effect:*** The issue of loco effect can mar the assessment of soft skills where assessors are showing sympathy to those that are loyal to them at the expense of what they really deserve in assessment of their behaviours. There are cases of unscrupulous teachers awarding high marks to those who succumb to their immoral acts.
- ***Challenge of ignorance and lack of attention on the part of parents:*** A situation where parents are ignorant of what soft skills are and need for such soft skills for job opportunities will definitely pay little or no attention to their children's behaviours. If parents were business oriented who usually leave their homes early to their business offices have no time with their children by assessing their soft skills. Ignorance is a disease which can spread fast to destroy.

The Way Forward

Considering the challenges confronted by the assessment of soft skills, the phrenetic efforts to adopt the following strategies will go a long way to attenuate these constraints:

Curricula/Syllabi Review: In order to prepare our school products for the world of work, the competencies required by the citizens for their personal fulfillment, social inclusion, active citizenship and employability in our knowledge-based society should form integral parts of what to be taught in schools.

According to Kechagias (2011), competencies can be defined as a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes appropriate to the context. Key competencies needed by individuals for personal fulfillment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment, as identified by him, include:

- a. Communication in the mother tongue
- b. Communication in foreign languages
- c. Mathematical and basic competences in science and technology
- d. Digital competence
- e. Learning to learn i.e. ability to pursue and persist in learning
- f. Social and civic competences
- g. Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
- h. Cultural awareness and expression

Efforts geared towards inclusion of these soft skills in the school curricula will not only prepare the learners for world of work but improve the behavior of such pupils/students in the schools/colleges.

The questions that may strike the minds of the curriculum developers at this point are whether the soft skills to be taught should stand alone or be infused (embedded) into knowledge-based subject curricula and how the contents of each soft skill can be categorized into different levels of educational system. It is however posited here that considering the point where the application of soft skills become indispensable, that is work place, teaching of soft skills at tertiary educational level is expected to be isolated while embedded curricula become suitable for children at primary and post-primary levels.

The stand-alone curriculum for students of tertiary institutions is advocated for since it will make the students to appreciate the relevance of such soft skills to job performance and retention. On the other hand, embedded curricula become appropriate for primary and post-primary levels as the work load at these levels should be considerable and minimized.

Training and Re-training of Teachers: In order to achieve effectiveness in the teaching and assessment of soft skills, the competencies of teachers who teach, generate items and examine the performances of learners cannot be compromised. It therefore becomes pertinent to organize well-packaged training programmes on the teaching and assessment of soft skills for the existing teachers/lecturers in Nigerian educational system. There is no doubt that some of the soft skills recommended to be taught in our educational system are already intermixed into some management courses in tertiary institutions. In this situation, re-training of such teaching personnel becomes relevant for more attention to be given to such skills.

Emphasis is however, expected to be placed on the curriculum contents, teaching methods, instructional materials and measuring instruments in the course of such training and re-training.

Testimonial for adequately acquired Soft Skills: It is postulated here that at the end of any academic programme in each level of educational system, the demonstration of proficiency in all the generic skills acquired by the learners should be certified by issuing a testimonial by the evaluators or the examination bodies assessing such skills. This will address the challenge of certification issue if employed.

Sensitization Campaign/Awareness Creation: As earlier pointed out that many among the educational stakeholders lack the knowledge of soft skills, it is therefore necessary to design a sensitization or awareness creation programme where the masses will be informed and educated about the relevance of soft skills in workplace which paves way for the teaching and assessment of such skills in educational settings. Sensitization campaign or awareness creation can be done through media facilities such as television, radio and the printed means.

Provision of Relevant Material on Soft Skills: Although soft skills assessment is relatively new in sub-Saharan African countries, a lot of materials are available in many western countries such as European Union (European Communities, 2007), United States (Kechagias, 2011), England and Wales (Turner, 2002), Canada and Australia (Curtis, 2004), to mention but few. Nigerian as well as other African authors should develop interest in such contemporary subjects by writing relevant material to our context and make such books available in the market, that is, bookstores and educational institutions through renowned publishers.

Incentives in form of subsidy can also be introduced and given to such authors by all tiers of governments to motivate them to write on the relevant aspects of soft skills to our work environment.

Adoption of UNESCO Standard for Classroom Size: Considering the challenge of population crisis in most schools in developing nations such as Nigeria, the effectiveness of soft skills assessment can be ensured by strictly adhering to the Teacher-Students ratio of 1:30 recommended in UNESCO (2001). This in turn implies the need for more classrooms, furniture and teachers to accommodate very many students/pupils in our educational institutions. It therefore becomes necessary to increase on the annual budget for education to be able to adequately fund the assessment of soft skills.

Prospects

The issue of soft skills assessment has been proliferated in recent years . The teaching and assessment of soft skills tailored toward success in career It has emerged as at tool with enough power to make or break career (Kumar, 2013), while Win Learning (2013) opined that the

essence of introducing soft skills is to bridge the gap between having the technical skills needed and having the soft skills necessary to be successful in your career.

The recognition and implementation of the soft skills enumerated in this paper will without doubt enhance individual's career prospects and improve the individual's personality. A good number of challenges of effective assessment of soft skills have been identified and the way forward suggested as well. In line of this, it is believed that the successful assessment outcome will bring career prospects through the educational system since its concern is to see that the undergraduates have employable skills, more attractive to employers, have enhanced knowledge and are marketable. Every organisation is concerned with high productivity and as such boosting the economy of the nation. The soft skills if successfully assessed will go a long way in achieving the following:

Establishment of Educational Centres/Institutes that can train individuals on Soft Skills:

Apart from the expansion of our curriculum/syllabi to integrate courses on soft skills for job creation, educational centres/institutes can be established where individuals can be trained on soft skills as it is done in other countries. This in order words, will enhance job creation or placement of the trainees after completing their courses in one of the educational institutes, organization (private or government), or open his/her own training centres. This implies that the educational system in the country will be expanded for the betterment of the populace.

The advancement of the expected outcome will bring increase in the teaching job. As earlier said, successful assessment of soft skills is all about career making. If more educational institutes are established, more teachers – soft skills trainers are needed to do the job, and as such there is need for training and re-training of teachers in this field so as to have highly skilled teachers in the area. As the soft skills trainees becomes very crucial, the teaching job on the other hand becomes a good option for soft skill trainer. This will curb unemployment rate in the society, as more teachers will be recruited for career making.

The outcome will also go a long way to curb unemployment rate in the society since most of the undergraduates will have what is required in a workplace in order to put in their best to boost the economy of the country.

Personality development is another gain that can be achieved from successful assessment of soft skills in Nigeria. Some of the existing organizations in the country today are spending huge amount of money to train their employees in soft skills in order to live up to the expectation. If these employees were already trained, it is expected that it will help to personality development which is what the organizations are looking for now. Kumar (2013) is of the view that organizations are looking for employees who are already groomed and better off than their counterparts. These are people that will contribute to the productivity of the organization and also for the growth of the nation's economy. In the same vain, the individual's personality developments should be indicated in the testimonial's given in order to ascertain the acquisition

of the personal skills (Alertness, Assertiveness, Tolerance, Self-control, Self-respect, Honesty etc.).

Since there is fast change in a work structure, old control methods are being replaced by new structure and as such teams are being empowered to make decisions by demonstrating high skills levels for greater partnership between employees and management. This will go a long way to exposing skill deficiencies of management who have lower education levels and be less informed about participatory management styles.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of teaching and learning of soft skills has been explained in this paper to be a function of such factors as categorization of soft skills into different educational levels, personality development, adoption of UNESCO standard on teacher-learners ratio, provision of relevant instructional materials and textbooks, establishment of soft skills training institutes and training and re-training of the existing teachers in our schools. Phrenetic efforts made to have these factors in place will not only ensure the effectiveness in teaching and learning of the subject (i.e. soft skills) but also prepare the products for future workplace challenges. This will result in having a more reliable and enhanced assessment system.

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