

INVESTIGATING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS ACQUISITION OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT IN FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (SPECIAL) OYO, OYO STATE NIGERIA: THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

BY

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Abstract

This study was designed to examine locus of control, self-concept and social support as determinants of employability skills of pre-service teachers with hearing impairment in Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria. The descriptive design of correlational type was adopted for the study. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used. First, purposive sampling was used to select all pre-services teachers with hearing impairment. At the second stage, five schools were purposively selected in the college. The third stage involved purposive selection of seventy (70) pre-services teachers with hearing impairment from 1001 and 2001. Instruments used were self-structured questionnaire with reliability: Employability ($r = 0.79$), Locus of control ($r = 0.74$), Self-concept ($r = 0.71$), Social support ($r = 0.75$). Data were analysed, using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression at 0.05 level of significance. There was significant positive correlation between employability skills of pre-service teachers and locus of control ($r = .354$), self-concept ($r = .428$) and social support ($r = .409$). There was a significant composite contribution of all the independent variables to employability of pre-service teachers with hearing impairment ($F_{(4, 65)} = 7.714$). The relative contribution of each of the independent variables to employability is as follows: locus of control ($\beta = .206$; $t = 1.818$), self-concept ($\beta = .246$; $t = 2.132$) and social support ($\beta = .291$; $t = 2.633$). It is concluded that locus of control, self-concept and social support have positively impacted pre-service teachers with hearing impairment in Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, Oyo state, Nigeria. It is therefore important for all special education stakeholders to consciously develop pre-service teachers' locus of control, self-concept and social support and effect positive change on how pre-service teachers with hearing impairment can be employable and harness jobs opportunity in Nigeria.

Keyword: Employability, Locus of control, Self-concept, Social support, Pre-service teachers with hearing impairment

Introduction

In the field of disability studies, the success of any service is judged by the ability of the service to enable people with disabilities move steps towards independent living. Being gainfully employed has indelible impact on how every person with a disability lives independently and higher education plays a critical role in preparing person or youths with disabilities for employment. Higher institutions are generally regarded as major actors in human capital development. It is impossible to overstate the importance of higher education in improving young people's employability in this era of globalization. Weligamage (2009) observed that the current changing business environment emphasizes the importance of education for employability skills, focusing on the development of not only skills but also practical experience. Training of undergraduates with the practical aspect of work is contemporarily needed because the practice enhances their employability skills. Employability skills are the basic critical skills required to fit into the labour market in order to gain employment and advance on the job competencies. These include occupational intelligence needed to equip an employee to carry out his duties effectively, efficiently, and can be regarded as career foundation blocks which revolve around interpersonal skills,

communication skills, problem solving skills, customer relation skills, office practice skills and competency skills (Watters & Diezmann 2015).

Employers expect to have well-developed employability skills, so that they can make an immediate contribution in the workplace when recruited. Saunders and Zuzel (2010) submitted that employability skills can be grouped into four major groups namely workplace management skills, employee personal skills, technical skills, and interpersonal skills. Emphasizing the importance of employability skills, Tunnah and Leacy (2012) pointed that equipping students with different employability skills in the University helps them to be self-reliant, relevant and functional members of the society whether employed by government or self-employed. Stressing the importance of employability skills, Rachel and Tova (2013) viewed that today's employers are concerned about finding good workers who not only love basic academic skills like reading, writing, mathematics, but also higher order thinking skills, such as learning, reasoning, thinking creatively, decision making, problem solving, and personal qualities in the form of team spirit, integrity, adaptability and flexibility, self-directed and self-management among others.

Pre-service teachers are a student enrolled in teacher preparation programme and must successfully complete stipulated requirement be including course work and filed experience before being awarded a teaching certificate. During this period of the teaching practice goes side by side while they are acquiring knowledge on the best ways to employ in teaching and learning process. Pre-service teachers' preparation is a collection of unrelated courses and field experience that are more related to teaching and learning process. The college student is gradually introduced into the teaching role for a particular class by a mentor or cooperating teachers (Tondeur, Howard & Yang 2020). The cooperating teachers work with and encourage the pre-service teachers to assume greater responsibilities in classroom management and instruction as the experience progress. The pre-service teachers begin as an observer and finish the progressive teaching experience as a competent professional. The teachers in this case learn from their practice and from the culture and norms of the unique school setting wherein they have been placed and interact with these cultures. It is important for student teachers to learn the methodology of how to get in touch with the core qualities of good teachers and how they can stimulate these qualities in themselves after gained employed. This will lead to deeper involvement in the learning process of students as well as their lecturer (Uerz, Volman and Kral (2018). Pre-service teaching is a period of guided, supervised teaching, acquiring necessary skills and experience in the professional educational programme in order to become competent teachers and mastery of knowledge. Pre-service teaching is an essential experience in the professional education program. Although other college courses, activities, and practical contribute knowledge and experience to the prospective teachers, pre-service teaching provided the opportunity to experience the demanding and rewarding task of assuming major teaching responsibilities. The pre-service teacher experience is designed to provide controlled learning situation in which the prospective teachers can put into practice the principle and methods learned in the college (Vongkulluksn, Xie, & Bowman 2018). The teacher education program needs to allow the space where a teacher's personality could be developed as someone who is reflective, introspective and capable of analyzing his or her own life and process of education at school so that after becoming a teacher, he becomes an agent of change. The ultimate goal is for pre-service teachers to achieve competency in entry skills in the teaching profession so as to be gainfully employed in respect of their abilities and disabilities.

Pre-service teachers with hearing impairment are usually the nation's largest minority and they tend to be marginalized in all aspects of life. They usually experience substantially poorer quality of life and are more likely to be unemployed due to institutional discrimination. If they do work, they are likely to be underemployed, earn low salaries, experience less job security and have fewer chances for advancement (Isiah, 2011). Many are being denied

the right to work and this could lead to increase rates of unemployment, underemployment and economic inactivity among persons with hearing impairment tend to be much higher than those of other workers. For the great majority of pre-service teachers, work is a major aspect of life, not only necessary for economic survival but also instrumental in meeting myriad social and psychological needs (Adigun, 2021). This is, of course, just as true for students who are hearing impaired as for other adults. Pre-service teachers with hearing impairment historically have experienced higher rates of unemployment and underemployment and lower levels of educational attainment than people without hearing impairment. Despite the intervention to reduce level of unemployment among pre-service teachers with hearing impairment only little attention was paid on psychological factors as determinant to employability skills acquisitions of pre-service teachers with hearing impairment. Psychological variables are locus of control, attitude, resilience, social support, and self-efficacy, senses of coherence, self-esteem, and perception. In view of the need and demand locus of control, self-concept and social support were chosen for this study.

Locus of control is a suitable personality trait that describes the extent to which pre-service with hearing impairment attribute the cause or control of employment choice to themselves. There are two categories of locus of control: internal and external locus of control. Internal locus of control describes pre-service teachers with hearing impairment who believe that what happens to them is determined by their abilities, efforts and actions, while external locus of control describes those who believe that fate, luck on outside factors (out of their control) are responsible for what happens to them (McNeil, 2000). Thus, it is necessary to note that locus of control is an important construct, perceived as the cause of specific events as attributed to external element of the pre-service teachers, revealing that these individuals believe that they could control events that affect them. In other words, locus of control is seen as a personal belief of pre-service teachers that the events which occur in life are either a result of personal control or outside forces such as fate, luck and environment. Thus, those who perform better in most employment situations generally possess a moderately strong internal rather than external locus of control. Pre-service teachers with hearing impairment with an internal locus of control generally expect that their actions produce predictable outcome while those with external locus of control expect that the outcome they receive is due to external variables such as fate, luck, environment and other circumstances. Pre-services teachers with hearing impairment with high internal locus of control believe that event results primarily from their own behaviour and actions, they are likely to assume that their efforts will be successful and are more likely to be active in seeking information and knowledge concerning their career choice.

Self-concept is defined by Hashim and Wok (2014), as people's general composite or collective view of themselves across multidimensional sets of domain specific perceptions. These perceptions are based on self-knowledge and evaluation of value or worth of one's own capabilities formed through experiences with and interpretations of the environment. Pre-service teachers' self-concept will address a more factual side of their lives, such as knowing what they enjoy or how they tend to think. Clark, Helfrich and Hatch (2015) explained that a pre-service teacher's self-concept is partially dependent on his or her immediate environment in order to have confidence in performing a task. He said further, that self-concept as the big-fish-little-pond effect (BFLPE). If the average ability of classmates is high, equally able students most likely will have a more negative academic self-concept. However, if the average ability in a given student's class is low, then he or she is more likely to have a positive self-concept. Self-concept is very important during a student's school year because much of the student's daily activities are being carried out through interaction which is related to school. Once these academic self-concepts have been established, it can be difficult to alter them. Students with low self-esteem can resort to a self-handicapping strategy. For example, they exhibit such behaviours as not studying for an exam, and they turn up the music while studying for an attention demanding lesson, thus intentionally decreasing the chances of being successful in a task. This is clearly self-

handicapping behaviour. These actions decrease the success of the individual. The importance of self-perception for the growth and development of children has been demonstrated in studies showing how self-efficacy can enhance or impair the level of cognitive functioning and performance (Bandura, 2007). A student's expectations about his own capabilities determine his behaviour and influence his motivation, effort, and persistence regarding both the difficulty of the task and task efficacy. Teachers have important roles to play in influence on how students perceive his/her own academic abilities by creating self-confidence and mutual relationship with students during and after school activities. This process leading to an enhancement or decrease in the students with hearing impairment beliefs about oneself begins with social support interaction between teachers, students and their environment.

Social support is a multidimensional concept that has been conceptualized and defined in different ways. There is a lack of consensus about the definition, which has resulted in a lack of consistency and comparability among studies. However, is the perception and actually that one is cared for, has assistance available from other people, and most popularly, that one is part of a supportive social network. Social support is perceived as belief that help has been offered or would be offered during times of needs. Social support generally refers to the various types of support that people receive from others, which lead them to believe that they are cared for, are esteemed and valued, and are part of a network of communication and mutual obligations. Social support one of the important factors that influences the well-being and quality of life of all people (Mann and Konstam, 2011) divided social support into four categories: informative support (the provision of information, suggestions, and guidance), instrumental support (the provision of financial assistance or material aid), emotional support (the provision of empathy, affection, trust, acceptance, and care), and companionship support (the provision of a sense of social belonging). Social support from family members and friends is important for the career choice of students both with and without impairments (Zhang, Miao, Yan and Peng 2014). Hence, this study seeks to determine the psychological factors as determinant of employability skills acquisition of pre-service teachers with hearing impairment in Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be answered:

1. What is the relationship between the independent variables (Locus of control, Self-concept and social support) and the dependent variable (employability) among pre-service teachers with hearing impairment in Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo Oyo state, Nigeria?
2. What is the composite contribution of the independent variable to the dependent variable among pre-service teachers with hearing impairment in Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Oyo state, Nigeria?
3. What is the relative contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable among pre-service teachers with hearing impairment in Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Oyo state, Nigeria?

Methodology

The study adopted mixed methods design, because quantitative and qualitative data were collected in the study. The population of this study comprised pre-service teachers with hearing impairment in Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, Oyo state, Nigeria. The study comprised seventy (70) pre-service teachers with hearing impairment who were drawn from five schools in the college through multi-stage sampling technique First; five schools were selected from the whole college in Federal college. Secondly, 100L and 200L pre-service teachers with hearing were

purposively selected from each of the five schools in the college. Thirdly, fourteen pre-service teachers with hearing impairment were randomly selected in each of the five schools. The study made use of a structured questionnaire tagged “Employability Skills Acquisition of Pre-Service Teachers Scale (ESAPSTS)” and structured interview questions for data collection. The instrument is a 35-items questionnaire which was divided into sections A, B C and D. Section A consisted of five (5) statement on demographic of the respondents; Section B contains ten (10) information about locus of control; Section C contains ten (10) item (questions) which sought information about self-concept while Section D contains 10 item (question) which elicited information on social support. The research instruments was scrutinized by professional in Psychology and Special education for content and face validity. The reliability coefficient, obtained was .78. Data obtained were analysed using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to measure the relationship among the independent variables and the dependent variable, while Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) was used to find out the linear and joint contributions of the predictor variables on the criterion at 0.005 level of significance why gathered qualitative data were examined thematically.

Results

Research Question One: What is the relationship between the independent variables (Locus of control, Self-concept and social support) and the dependent variable (employability) among pre-service teachers with hearing impairment in Federal college of education (special), Oyo?

Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics and Inter-correlations Matrix for the variables

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(1) employability	1.000			
(2) LOC	0.354** (0.003)	1.000		
(3) Self-concept	0.428** (0.000)	0.327** (0.006)	1.000	
(4) Social support	0.409** (0.000)	0.318** (0.007)	0.276** (0.021)	1.000

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

****Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)**

Table 4.1 contains descriptive statistics and inter-correlations among the study variables. As shown in the table 1, locus of control ($r = .354$; $p < .01$); Self-Concept ($r = .428$; $p < .01$) and Social support ($r = .409$; $p < .01$) were correlated with employability.

Research Question Two: What is the composite contribution of the independent variables (Locus of control, Self-concept and social support) to the dependent variable (employability) among pre-service teachers with hearing impairment in Federal College of Education (special), Oyo?

Table 4.2: Multiple Regression Analysis on Employability

R	R-square	Adjust R-square	Std. error of the estimate
.567	.322	.280	4.26771

Analysis of Variance

Sources of variation	Sum of square (SS)	DF	Mean square	F	Sig
Regression	561.972	4	140.493	7.714	.000 ^b
Regression	1183.870	65	18.213		
Total	1745.843	69			

The table 4.2 above shows that three (3) independent variables when combined together have significantly contributed to employability. The value of R is obtained as .567; R^2 as .322 and R^2 (adjustment) is obtained as .280. The analysis of variance performed on the multiple regressions yielded an F- ratio value of 7.714 and was found to be significant at 0.05. This shows that the three independent combined together to account for 28% of the variance in employability of pre-service teachers with hearing impairment in Federal College of Education Oyo (Special), Oyo State.

Research Question Three: What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (Locus of control, Self-concept and social support) to the dependent variable (employability) among pre-service teachers with hearing impairment in Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo?

Table 4.3: Relative Contribution of Independent Variables to the Prediction of employability

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.112	6.058		.018	.985
Locus of control	.294	.162	.208	1.818	.074
Self- concept	.414	.194	.246	2.132	.037
Social support	.471	.179	.291	2.633	.011

The table above 4.3 shows how each of the independent variables made significant contribution to the prediction of employability of hearing-impaired pre-service teachers in Federal College of Education Oyo (Special), Oyo State. As obtained, social support made the most significant contribution to the criterion, ($\beta = .291$; $t = 2.633$; $P < 0.05$); then Self-concept, ($\beta = .246$; $t = 2.132$; $P < 0.05$). Other variables i.e. Locus of control ($\beta = .206$; $t = 1.818$; $P > 0.05$).

Thematic

Analysis of Data from Structured Interview

The interview was conducted randomly among the respondents selected for the study. For these pre-service teachers with hearing impairment, seven questions guide were developed for the interview with fifteen participants. Reports of the interview were presented below:

Question 1:

What strategies do you use to enhance your employability skills, and how do your personal beliefs and social support play a role in these strategies?

Responses, according to the students:

Virtually all the pre-service with hearing impairment believed their personal belief and Social support enhanced the employability skills acquisition. This was evident. in their responses: they *believe that every student, regardless of their abilities, deserves an engaging and supportive learning environment.*

Question 2: In what ways do you think your self-image affects your approach to developing employability skills?

Responses, according to the students:

Most of the pre-service teachers with hearing impairment interrogated were sure that *self-concept and positive self-image boost their confidence, encouraging them to pursue opportunities that may seem challenging and play a significant role in how they approach developing the employability skills.*

Question 3: Can you share an experience where your self-concept helped or hindered your learning in a professional context?

Responses, according to the students:

Some of the students interviewed were aware of the existence of self-concept that could improve their employability skills acquisition as they replied affirmatively that *“self-concept allowed them to take more initiative in professional settings.”*

Question 4: How do you believe your control over your learning experiences influences your ability to acquire employability skills?

Responses, according to the students:

Since it is generally believed that *“their control over the learning experiences plays a crucial role in acquiring employability skills by actively engaging in education, they have learned to advocate for themselves, seek out resources, and adapt learning strategies that work best for them.”*

Question 5: Can you describe a time when support from others made a difference in your learning process?

Responses, according to the students:

Reviewing the responses from the pre-service teachers with hearing impairment, the majority of them reported that *“they took the time to ensure that they were included in every discussion, using clear visual aids and written communication to share their thoughts.”*

Question 6: How do you think your beliefs about your abilities (locus of control) and your self-concept interact with the support you receive from others in skills acquisition?

Responses, according to the students:

Some of the students interviewed believed that “*interplay between beliefs and external support creates a positive feedback loop, where my confidence grows as you acquire new skills and become more open to seeking and valuing the support around them*”.

Question 7: How do your peers and mentors support your journey in acquiring employability skills?

Responses, according to the students: Some of the students interviewed submit that “*classmates often collaborate on projects, allowing us to share ideas and learn from one another’s strengths, which provide a diverse perspective, which helps me develop critical thinking and teamwork skills essential for any workplace.*”

These questions are designed to illuminate the interplay between individual psychological constructs (locus of control, self-concept) and external factors (social support) in the context of employability skills acquisition. By examining personal beliefs and the influence of social relationships, the interview can reveal deeper insights into how these determinants collectively impact an individual's journey toward acquiring essential skills for the job market. These questions aim to delve deep into the interconnectedness of locus of control, self-concept, and social support, providing insights into how these factors contribute to the employability skills of pre-service teachers with hearing impairment.

Discussion

The findings revealed that there was significant relationship between locus of control, Self-concept and social support and dependent variable employability skills acquisition among pre-service teachers with hearing impairment. The finding of the study revealed that locus of control had a significant relationship with employability of pre-services teachers with hearing impairment. This finding is not unexpected as it corroborates Oyewumi and Adeniyi (2013) who found that locus of control is a determining factor of employability of pre-services teachers with hearing impairment why self-concept had positive impact employability skills acquisition of pre-service teachers with hearing impairment. This finding is an indication that high self-concept is good in fostering employability of pre-service teachers with hearing impairment. The finding may be as a result of the fact that student teachers with high self-concept view themselves as being capable of achieving whatever they want in life. This finding also confirms Kammeyer-Mueller, Judge and Piccolo (2008) who found positive and significant relationships between self-concept and employability of teachers with hearing impairment. Table 4.2, shows that there was composite contribution of the independent variables (Locus of control, Self-concept and social support) to the dependent variable (employability skills acquisition) among pre-service teachers with hearing impairment. This means that the dependent variable was jointly contributed to the independent variable. The finding that locus of control, self-concept and social support have significant interaction effect on employability of pre-service teacher with hearing impairment accounted for a unique discovery in employability studies as it relates to hearing impairment. This is new to literature and requires further studies and replication in the future researches. The findings of this study agree with that of Grammenos (2014) examined the relationship between social support, locus of control, entrepreneurial self-concept. Findings revealed that locus of control, self-concept, and social support had significantly contribution with pre-service teachers’ entrepreneurial intentions. Table 4.3, shows that there was relative contribution of the independent variables (Locus of control, Self-concept and social support) to the dependent variable (employability) among pre-service teachers with hearing impairment. The research question

stated that the relative contribution of the independent variables (Locus of control, Self-concept and social support) to the dependent variable (employability) among pre-service teachers with hearing impairment. This means that the dependent variables of the participants were relatively contributed to the independent variable. That locus of control, self-concept and social support had significant relative effect on employability skills acquisition among pre-service teacher with hearing impairment. The results agrees with the findings from various researches, such as Oyewumi and Adeniyi (2013) and Huber, Oswald, Webb, and Avila-John (2016) who found that locus of control, self-concept, and social support had great influence on pre-service teachers with hearing impairment on the nature of perception on the types of employment opportunity they wish to engage after graduation. Some studies (Roy, 1992; Ramdall, 1999) have shown that in general, the self-concept, locus of control and social support of students with hearing impairment are more negative (low) or than that of the general population.

From the interview conducted, findings revealed that locus of control; self-concept and social support had influence on the employability skills acquisition of pre-service teacher with hearing impairment. This was in line with Hansen and Nielsen (2008) remarked that locus of control had positive and significant effect on employability of pre-service teachers with hearing impairment. This result agrees with the past empirical findings on a qualitative study by Caliendo, Cobb-Clark, Deborah and Uhlendorff (2010) which demonstrated that adolescents with hearing impairment experienced various types of emotional, informational, and tangible support from their parents and that the majority were satisfied with the amount and kind of parental social support they received which help in fostering their employment opportunity. From the interview, some of the students admitted there was composite contribution of the independent variables (Locus of control, Self-concept and social support) to the dependent variable (employability skills acquisition) among pre-service teachers with hearing impairment. Which means that independent variables are imperative interconnected with one another in order to achieve employability skills acquisition among pre-service teachers with hearing impairment. It was discovered from the interview that there was relative contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable among pre-service teachers with hearing impairment. The findings of this study agree with that of Rachel and Tova (2013) in his study considered how locus of control, self-concept, and social support to which one believes one's actions influence their skills acquisition by pre-service teachers with hearing impairment and He explained further that locus of control is neither a skill nor a preference, but a determinant of beliefs about the efficacy of search effort pre-service teacher with internal locus of control (who believe their actions determine outcomes) search more intensively than their "external locus of control counterparts (who believe their actions have little effect on outcomes). Moreover, "internal" searchers set higher reservation wages than do "external" searchers. The findings also suggested that young job seekers with extreme locus of control are in their approaches to search in different ways, with "internals" holding out for excessively high wages and "externals" searching too little. As a result, both groups spend more time unemployed than individuals with average locus of control.

Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that psychological factors had a positive and significant relationship with employability of pre-service teachers with hearing impairment. Psychological factors such as locus of control, self-concept, and social support were equally found to be predicted of employment ability. Psychological factors examined in this study have indicated that how employable is considered to be an important characteristic of pre-services teachers with hearing impairment. From the foregoing, it could be observed that employability of pre-service teachers with hearing impairment is affected by identify formation, interest, relationships, cultural and work-

related context. In conclusion, unemployment person with hearing impairment often results in negative circumstances, traceable to lack psychological factors while developed career choice among them informs attainment of employment fulfilment in life.

Recommendations

1. Students should be encouraged to become more rational in their everyday activities and express strong beliefs as related to employment in order to provide the opportunity for personal and cognitive development in employment decision making.
2. Employment choice should be incorporated into classroom studies and specific self-efficacy training should be provided to the students in order to facilitate career decision making.
3. Continuous counselling or psychological intervention program should be put in place to help guide pre-services teachers with hearing impairment for them to rediscover their career potential, abilities and capabilities and improve their employment decision making.

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