

Communication Skills Confidence, Employability Skills and Workplace Preparedness: Perceptions of Finalist-Undergraduate Students at the Institute of Adult Education in Tanzania

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if students are confident in their communication skills and well prepared for employment. The study utilized a descriptive research design. The target population included all 125 finalist-undergraduate students at the Institute of Adult Education. A purposive sampling technique was used in this study because all final-year undergraduate students were involved in providing reliable information. Data were collected using questionnaires and a 5 point Likert-scale were administered to respondents while focus group interviews were conducted with 10 respondents. Data were analysed using SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistics technique was used for data analysis. Results indicated that, the courses in adult and community development prepared them most for future jobs ($M = 4.93$). Of the respondents, 62.4% reported to work in an adult education organization and 25.6% planned to attend post-graduate course after graduation. Students were very confident in their communication skills (51.4%). Respondents considered BSc. in Entrepreneurship and Adult Education (36%) and Bachelor degree in Mathematics and other Teaching Science Subject (24%), Bachelor degree in Information Technology (20%) to be most needed programmes. Based on the findings, it was suggested that, curriculum revision should always be informed by findings from different studies as well as being guided by assessment for competencies and skills including student's reflections on the curriculum they went through and how much they find it useful/not useful during their learning practices.

Keywords: Communication skills, Confidence, Employability, Preparedness, Students

Introduction

Higher education (HE) discourse has long been dominated by the employability debate because the major aim of HE is to generate graduates who are workplace ready (Jackson 2017; McGunagle & Zizka, 2020). Due to its great importance, the employability of university graduates is a subject of much interest to researchers, policymakers and curriculum planners around the world. The effects of graduate unemployability range from poor economic development and psychological problems (Bilgic & Yilmaz, 2012; Paul and Moser, 2009) to social unrest in some countries (Pervaiz, Saleem & Sajjad, 2012).

Higher education institutions are increasingly expected to engage with the challenges of the contemporary world. Policymakers have repeatedly asked for investment in personal skills as a route to building resilience and aiding recovery following the economic recession of 2008 (OECD, 2012; Okay-Somerville & Scholarios, 2019). The industry reinforces this call by requiring professionals who can fulfil the demands of the new contexts and trends, such as the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Schwab, 2016). However, higher education institutions are often criticized for not preparing graduates for the real contexts involved in their professional practice (Abelha, Fernandes, Mesquita, Seabra & Ferreira-Oliveira, 2020). The ill-preparation of university graduates is considered the result of the out-dated and irrelevant curriculum in the higher education system, the traditional teaching methods and the absent of career guidance in most universities (Knight & Yorke (2004). For that reason, it is not surprising that graduate employability has become one of the central issues that drive the mission of higher education institutions (Small, Shacklock, & Marchant, 2018). Thus, several efforts have been made by higher education institutions to meet these identified challenges. For instance, a recent report from the Higher Education Academy (Artess, Hooley, & Mellors-Bourne 2017) highlights effective strategies that can be adopted by higher education institutions, gathered from existing literature, in order to embed employability into institutional initiatives namely, development and/or consolidations of services for institutional career guidance; reinforcing employability through curricula (e.g., entrepreneurship courses) and extracurricular activities (e.g., volunteering activities); encouraging networking that enables the students to interact with employers and real experiences in the labour market (e.g., mentoring programs); supporting students in their personal development (e.g. self-confidence); and encouraging international mobility and

critical thinking regarding their learning experiences as a whole. In summary, these kinds of initiatives allow higher education institutions to develop an institutional narrative based on employability (Billet, 2015).

The United Republic of Tanzania, just like the rest of the countries in the world, is beset by increasingly uncertain changes brought by globalization. Cowen (2011) has advanced a similar argument that previous technological advances were far more impactful than recent ones. Atkinson and Wu (2017) provided empirical evidence on this point by showing that recent decades have resulted in lower rates of creation and destruction of new occupations relative to previous eras in economic history. From the point of view of these scholars, the latest wave of advanced technologies (i.e., digital technology, artificial intelligence (AI), and automation) is unlikely to affect labour markets nearly as much as the technological changes of prior generations.

Digitalization is reducing demand for routine and manual tasks while increasing demand for high-skilled tasks and for problem-solving and interpersonal skills (OECD, 2016). Technological change is likely to require workers in science, technology and innovation (the so-called STEM skills) and workers who can embrace technologies in their work. It will also require business management (strategy, marketing) and design skills to deploy technology projects, and skilled workers to operate and maintain technologies (e.g. solar photovoltaic installers, robot technicians). As digital technologies have become more pervasive, the demand for relevant skills has risen. Not only does this include the technical and vocational skills needed to design, operate and maintain digital infrastructure –e.g. computer and electronics knowledge –but also the ICT generic skills for workers to be able to use digital technologies –e.g. the ability to interact with computers.

Some studies have established that globalization partly spurred by technological innovation, has massively disrupted economic trajectories and business models (Walsh, 2018). Such disruption is increasingly displacing jobs and changing the skills needed in the labour market (Nghia, 2019; Oliver, 2015). For example, in Europe, the ongoing shift from a manufacturing to a service economy (Dolphin, 2015) is undeniably disrupting the labour market, requiring more skilled employees in addition to new skills. Similarly, 47% of jobs in the United States (Frey and Osborne, 2017), 40% in Australia (Durrant-Whyte, McCalman, O'Callaghan, Reid & Steinberg, 2015), and 77% and 69% in China and India,

respectively (Frey, Osborne & Holmes, 2016), are at risk due to automation. Peters (2018) has revealed that over the last decade, routine and manual labour have largely been replaced by automated machines through the use of artificial intelligence and robotics. Certainly, these developments are likely to alter the nature of jobs in both occupations and industries, spurring job losses. In line with this period of globalization, higher education institutions (HEIs) should inspire and enable graduates to develop their capabilities to the highest potential levels throughout their life so that they grow intellectually, contribute effectively to society, achieve personal fulfilment and be well- equipped for work. It becomes essential for HEIs to respond to unpredictable labour market and make parallel adjustments in order to fulfil their mission. One organized way to keep pace with this time of quickening change is for HEIs to provide avenues for the graduates to gain certain general skills and qualities that will make them completely geared up to the real demands of the world of work. OECD (2018) contended that, teaching and learning these generic skills are consistent with the emerging needs of a world economy in a high-performance workplace.

Employability skills are the core skills and traits needed in nearly every job. These are the *general skills* that make someone desirable to an organization (Doyle, 2020). The employability skills have varied classifications like basic academic skills, higher-order thinking skills and personal qualities with more detailed skill sets (UNESCO, 2016). These generic employability skills are useful across all levels of positions from job entrants to chiefs of offices (Singh, Xaviour & Ramly, 2014). Solomon and Nwoko (n.d) asserted that many employers require applicants to have these skills to be seriously considered for employment. Similarly, these skills are crucial for employment and workplace success and serve as basis for lifelong learning needed by graduates to find a job (Clarke, 2008). The significance of employability skills in work settings is then recognized (Sung et al. 2013; Tarvid, 2015).

A new career era has dawned in which a volatile work environment dictates that individuals need to be flexible and adaptable in order to be marketable to various employers. This has resulted in the surfacing of new career forms and new ways of working, which signifies the necessity for more research into employability (Clarke, 2008). Employability, however, remains a contentious topic with conflicting definitions and conceptualizations and a lack of theoretically

informed research (Fugate, Kinicki & Ashforth, 2004). Bridgstock (2009) adds that this contention extends to the attributes that higher learning students need to promote their employability. While graduating students may be enhancing their employability opportunities by achieving a college or university degree, they may not be realizing the payoff of achieving a job upon graduating from college. This problem could be due to lacking, crucial employability skills needed to find employment and be successful. It is unknown if graduates from the Institute of Adult Education possess the employability skills needed in the workplace. Therefore, these college graduates should be assessed in an effort to shed light on the issue. Some scholars (e.g., Mwangonde, 2014) have contended that only 20% of university graduates in Tanzania find employment each year, and employers claim that university graduates lack relevant job competencies (Munishi & Emmanuel, 2016). This suggests an increasing unemployment rate in the country; however Tanzania's official statistics indicate that the rate of unemployment has dropped slightly, falling from 10.3% in 2014 to 9.7% in 2018 (NBS, 2019). This is comparable to the unemployment rate in the neighbouring Kenya, which stood at 9.3% in 2019 (Plecher, 2020).

Attempts to measure employability outcomes have encountered even greater problems than efforts to define the concept (Cranmer, 2006 & Bennett, 2019). There has been a tendency to adopt "narrow" approaches to assess employability based on initial graduate destination indicators (Bridgstock, 2009), while others focus on sets of skills that employers require from graduates entering the new world of work (Bennete, 2019, Mok & Qian, 2018). The massification of HE have resulted in unpredictable transitions from education to the market (Brown, Lauder & Ashton, 2011). The literature has established that preparing employable graduates is a common challenge for HE systems, including those in developed nations (Abou-Setta, 2014; Chistyakova, Semenova, Vladislav, & Paquet, 2015; Sung, Ng, Loke & Ramos 2013; Tarvid, 2015). This is largely due to the dynamics of the graduate labour market, which keep changing and new skills and knowledge.

Employability, however, extends beyond these knowledge, skills and abilities (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008) to include a broader collection of individual attributes and actions (Fugate et al., 2004). There are consequently a limited number of sound measures of employability, and graduate employability in particular. In light of these aspects, as well as the fact that the Tanzania environment has

scant research on the topic in this context, it is necessary to determine if students at the Institute of Adult Education feel prepared for employment and are confident in their communication skills. In this way the characteristics that help individuals be adaptable in a constantly changing economy can be identified and areas of development can be highlighted that will help those yet to start working, or already employed, to be desirable to current and future employers. The purpose of this study was to determine if students at the Institute of Adult Education feel well prepared for employment and if they are confident in their communication skills. The specific objectives of this study were to (a) assess how well the courses at the Institute of Adult Education prepare students for future employment, (b) assess the perceptions of undergraduate students at the Institute of Adult Education regarding post-graduation employment, (c) examine how confident are the current undergraduate students at the Institute of Adult Education in their communication skills, and (d) identify other programmes to be offered at the Institute of Adult Education to prepare professionals for the 21st century. The following research questions guided this study:

- i) How well the courses at the Institute of Adult Education prepare students for future employment?
- ii) What are the perceptions of undergraduate students at the Institute of Adult Education regarding post-graduation employment?
- iii) How confident are the current undergraduate students at the Institute of Adult Education in their communication skills?
- iv) What other programmes do you recommend to be offered at the Institute of Adult Education to prepare professionals for the 21st century?

Literature Review

This study focused on human capital theory (HCT), originally proposed in the 18th century by Adam Smith and later popularized by Becker (1962). “Human capital” refers to a collection of individual attributes, such as knowledge, skills, experience, training, abilities, talent, intelligence, and judgment. The fundamental argument of HCT is that education and training are investments that make people more productive. Accordingly, individuals who are more productive will earn more and be more employable. Scholars (see, e.g., Becker, 1962; Sicherman & Galor, 1990) have argued that quality HE (i.e., training) can make it easier for a person to find employment and build a career. The

theory suggests that employability characterizes the way in which a person enhances his or her desirability to the world of work.

Analysing employability using the lens of human capital as a theoretical frame, regular university curriculum reviews, competence development through university–industry partnerships, strengthened quality assurance systems, and the alignment of university education with the country’s development plans are important aspects of shaping and improving a person’s employability. As a result, the quality of skills, knowledge, training, experiences, abilities, talent, and intelligence developed through HE forms the human capital for obtaining employment. According to HCT, human capital represents the quality of labour (i.e., skills and knowledge), whereas labour denotes employers’ perceived factor of production (Mohr & Seymore, 2012). HCT was considered an appropriate theoretical lens for this research, with an emphasis on investing in human capital to enhance graduate employability and reduce unemployment.

Human capital theory addresses the relationship between higher education attributes and labour market outcomes. Human capital theory posits that investment in education and training leads to returns in private and social lives (Tran, 2015). Social benefits include producing highly skilled individuals for economic development of the country. Private returns are highlighted in higher earnings (Adrian, 2017), significant career progression and broader labour market opportunities. Higher education institution, therefore, is viewed as a shared investment between the government and individual graduates. Higher education institutions are under pressure from policymakers to produce employable graduates. However, it remains unclear what constitutes employability and the required graduate employability attributes. Pool and Sewell (2007) suggested a Career EDGE model to understand graduate employability, as shown in *Figure 1*.

CareerEDGE – The Key to Employability

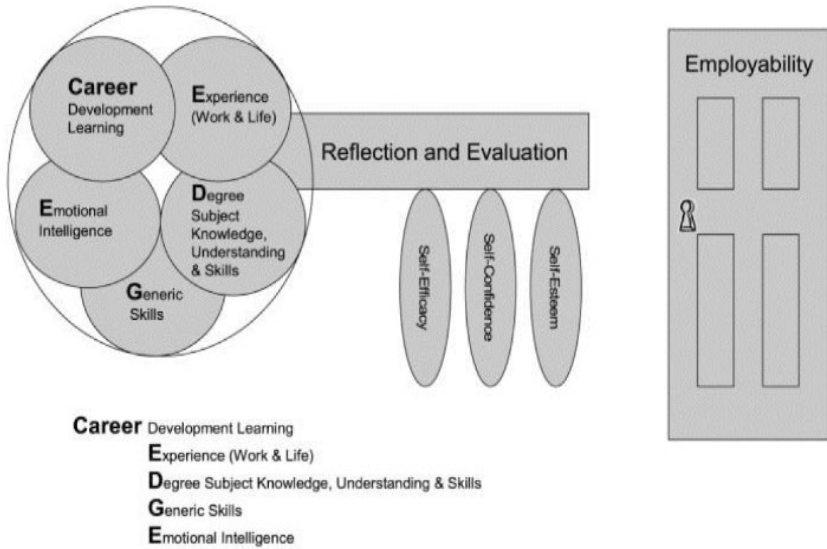


Figure 1: The Career EDGE Model

Source: Pool and Sewell (2007).

Pool (2017) suggested that missing or overlooking any factor as shown in Figure 1 will result in a negative effect on graduate employability. This model provides guidelines on how employability can be enhanced. Students, however, have high expectations upon completion of their studies, despite missing some of those elements. The perception is that the qualifications will create employment opportunities (Mashigo, 2014; Mncayi, 2016). Employers, however, feel that graduates lack the relevant skills to compete in the open labour market (Goodman & Tredway, 2016; Paadi, 2014), but the graduates have high expectations (Mncayi, 2016). Subsequently, it is vital that students be realistic about their expectations and what they can offer to employers.

Current Thinking on Graduate Skills in Higher Education

Employability operates on several levels but is often discussed at an individual level: a *student's* graduate skills. At an institutional level, employability is a driver of academic policy and a concept that incentivizes resourcing of student services, especially careers services, entrepreneurship activities, and internship/

work experience programmes. Employability activities are also embedded by academics into the curriculum and in-course learning experiences (McWilliams & Allan, 2014). These kinds of initiatives and programmes are becoming more pervasive within HEIs and embedding of employability programmes and related innovations in pedagogic approaches have proliferated across HEIs in recent years (Artess et al., 2017). Indeed, in the UK, only 30% of employers look for specific degree types when recruiting (Williams & Ball, 2015). This reflects a highly flexible job market, which allows graduates from any discipline to apply for a wide range of jobs not directly related to their degree, in so far as they have the required skills (Tomlinson, 2012).

One of the ways that HEIs have responded to this has been to develop graduate skills through Graduate Attributes (GA) frameworks, used to describe the qualities and skills they believe students should develop their studies at their institutions. While there are commonalities across GA frameworks (Artess et al, 2017; Winberg, Staak, Bester, Sabata, Scholtz, Sebolao, Monnapula-Mapesela, Ronald, Makua, Snyman, & Machika, 2018), graduate *attributes* are differentiated from graduate *skills* in that GAs are defined by individual institutions and can risk narrow definitions, excluding wider graduate skills. Educational researchers, policy-makers, and industry bodies have been attempting to define a comprehensive range of graduate skills. These definitions tend to include literacies, soft skills and ‘character qualities’, such as resilience and autonomy, as well as cognitive skills such as critical thinking (Soffel, 2016). This project focuses on graduate *skills*, developed out of the employability discourse, and investigates whether students are developing the skills they will need to thrive in the changeable and global graduate labour market (Jones & Killick, 2013).

Definition of Employability and Employability Skills

Tan & French-Arnold (2012) define employability as referring to “a wide range of attributes and competencies that enable the job seekers to gain and maintain employment such as communication skills, logical, analytical and problem solving skills, amongst others”. According to Schreuder & Coetzee (2011:48) employability refers to an individual’s capacity and willingness to become and remain attractive in the labour market, also the individual’s capability to be successful in a wide range of jobs. It is about being capable of getting and

creating and keeping fulfilling work and having the knowledge, understanding, skills, experience and personal attributes to move self-sufficiently within the labour market and to realize one's potential through sustainable and fulfilling employment experiences throughout the course of one's life.

The above-mentioned definitions of employability represent a shift from an individual getting a job to a definition that places at its core the individual acquisition of a set of attributes that makes one appealing to a range of employers (Boden & Nedeva, 2010). People are more employable when they have a more expanded basic education and training, basic and transferable high-level skills, including teamwork, problem solving ability, but also skills in information and communication technologies and communication and language skills. This combination of skills, competencies enables the adaptation to changes occurring in the world of work ILO (2013). Employability is perceived as the possession of core skills or as an expanded set of generic attributes, or properties where a specific type of employers (company, sector, legislation) puts or specifies. The concept of employability depends not solely on the forces of the labour market, but also on other factors such as for example the willingness, ability, mobility, increased skills, operational flexibility in changing shifts and the ability to work someone beyond a narrow job description. Ultimately employability is someone's ability to be employable Misra and Mishra (2011). De Vos, De Hauw & Van der (2011) defined employability as, "an individuals' knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to adequately perform various tasks and carry responsibilities within a job, and to their adaptability to changes in the internal and external labour market" (p. 439). One's employability speaks to the probability of job obtainment and successful career management (De Vos et al., 2011).

Material and Methods

This is a descriptive study that utilizes quantitative methods of data collection and analysis. Survey instruments in the form of questionnaires and interviews were utilized. The instrument included questions about how well the courses at the institute of Adult Education (IAE) satisfies undergraduate students for the employment, projected post-graduation employment, students' communication skill confidence and what other programmes are to be offered at the Institute of Adult Education. The instrument contained a 5-point Likert-type scale where

respondents expressed their responses in terms of level categories. Four experts were consulted to review the instrument for face validity preceding the pilot test; two experts were from within the Institute and two were from outside (external). From April 6-10, 2019, the researcher pilot tested the instrument with five undergraduate students who were not included in the sample. Instrument reliability of data was measured post-hoc using SPSS version 20. The constructs related to post-graduation plans and employment had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86. The construct related to student confidence in communication skills had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91. The construct related to how well the courses at the IAE is preparing undergraduate students for the employment had Cronbach's alpha of 0.89 and the construct related to other programmes to be offered at the Institute of Adult Education had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.73.

The population for this study were all final year undergraduate students in the year 2019/2020 (N=125). The frame for the undergraduates was accessed from the Adult and Continuing Education Studies (ACES) Department. The sampling technique employed in this study was a purposive technique. Anonymity was guaranteed in completing the questionnaire, as by this means there was a greater likelihood of the responses reflecting honest opinions. The data collected through questionnaire was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20. The data was screened and treated for errors and missing values. The data was first analysed with a descriptive statistical analysis providing data for frequency and percentage and then mean and standard deviation were computed for the interpretation of respondents' characteristics and their perceptions. The reliability measurement was used to ensure that the developed scales measured consistently what were intended to be measured; the Cronbach's coefficient alpha was employed to test reliability.

Results

Perceptions of Undergraduate Students about How Well Courses at the Institute of Adult Education Prepare them for Employment

To determine how well courses (in general) at IAE prepare the respondents for employment, four questions addressed their feelings of preparation, or confidence, post-graduation employment (Table 1). On a 5-point Likert-type scale where 1 = extremely unprepared and 5=well prepared. Basically the answers provided by respondents (Table 1) indicated that, the courses in adult

and community development (BAECD) prepared them most for future jobs ($M = 4.93$, $SD = 0.87$), followed by adult and continuing courses (BACE) ($M = 4.52$, $SD = 0.12$), and Entrepreneurship Education, ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.21$). No one had extremely negative feelings about any of the adult or community development courses. The score for “overall, how well do you feel your courses prepared you for employment” was on the positive side ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 1.16$)

Table 1: STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT HOW WELL COURSES PREPARE THEM FOR EMPLOYMENT (N=125)

Courses	Extremely unprepared	Unprepared	Neutral	Prepared	Well prepared	Mean	SD
1. Adult and Community Development Courses ^a	0(0%)	4(3.7%)	5(4.6)	40(36%)	60(55.1%)	4.93	0.87
2. ICT ^{ab}	0(0%)	31(24.8%)	5(4.0%)	39(31%)	50(40%)	3.78	0.76
3. Research Methods ^{ab}	0(0%)	6(4.8%)	4(3.2%)	40(32%)	75(60%)	3.67	0.32
4. Entrepreneurship Education ^{ab}	0(0%)	28(22.4%)	4(3.2%)	35(28%)	58(46.4%)	3.78	1.21
5. Communication skills ^{ab}	0(0%)	14(11.2%)	11(8%)	45(36%)	55(44%)	3.69	0.32
6. Adult & Continuing Education Courses ^a	0(0%)	2(12.5%)	4(25%)	3(18.8%)	7(43.8%)	4.52	0.12
7. Overall feelings of preparedness	5(4%)	6(4.8%)	4(3.2%)	41(32%)	69(55.2%)	3.67	1.16

^a n=16, ^b n=109

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Respondents were asked about their post-graduation goals related to employment, higher education, and promotion. Participants could select what type of organization they expected to work for after graduation in a select-all-that apply format. Of the respondents ($n = 78$), 62.4% reported they expected to work in an adult education organizations/institutions, ($n=3$), 10% reported they would work for a non-government organization, ($n=2$), 1.6% self-employed, and ($n=10$), 8% higher education. 25.6% planned to attend post-graduate course (Figure 1). In an open-ended question, 90 students (72%) provided the type of job they were pursuing, such as teaching. Others were: policeman, 10(8%), community development 7(5.6%) and entrepreneurship 8(6.4%).

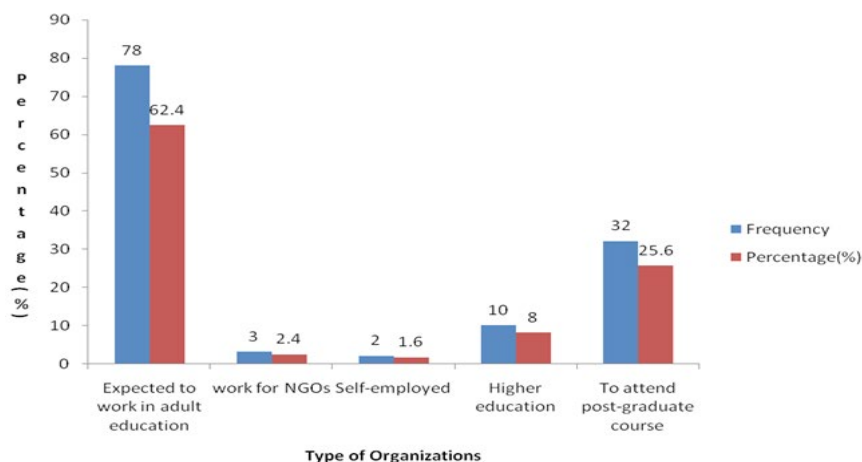


Figure 1: Type of organization Graduates they expected to work for after graduation

On a five-point Likert-type scale with 1 = very low and 5 = very high, participants designated their likelihood of pursuing a master's degree. In adult education, respondents reported a mean score of 2.48 (SD = 1.33, n = 60), with 12 reporting likely or very likely. The mean score for the likelihood of students seeking a master's degree in an area other than adult education was higher at 2.80 (SD = 1.45, n = 60) with 10 reporting likely or very likely.

Students Confidence Level in Communication Skills

This research question sought to determine the student's confidence level in their communication skills (Table 2). Confidence level was based on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = not confident at all to 5 = very confident. As Table 2 displays, 51.4% of students were very confident in reading Standard English Text, 52% were very confident in conversational speaking and 45.6% very confident with speaking with diverse audience. However, 36.8% % of the total learners' responses revealed scientific report writing as the major difficulty. Furthermore, 25.6% indicated that students were not confident in public speaking, yet another 21.6% of students mentioned trouble with basic writing. Further, 9.6% of the responses substantiated difficulty in speaking with diverse audience. Even reading Standard English Text seems to be a problematic issue for about 6.4% of respondents (Survey Data, 2019). Language proficiency may have a profound effect on an individual's ability to learn and develop, due to its key role in the transmission of information and regulation of cognitive processes (Binder

& Smith, 2013). When focusing on language proficiency, the communicative purpose of language is of primary importance (Baker, 2001). This is because the ability to communicate effectively is vital in the measurement of a person's capability to perform socially and academically (Young, Sercombe, Sachdev, Naeb, & Schartner, 2013).

Table 2: Students Confidence Level in Communication Skills (n=125)

	Not confident all	Less confid	Neutral	Confider	Very confici	Mea	SI
1. Reading Standard English Text	7(6.4%)	15(13.8%)	5(4.6)	42(38.5%)	56(51.4%)	3.93	0.8
2. Basic Writing	27(21.6%)	6(4.8%)	8(6.4%)	29(23.2%)	27(44%)	3.78	0.7
3. Reading Technique Paper	45(36%)	18(14.4%)	7(5.6%)	22(17.6%)	33(26.4%)	3.67	0.3
4. Basic Conversation Speaking	8(6.4%)	10(8%)	6(4.8%)	36(28.8%)	65(52%)	4.78	0.2
5. Public Speaking	32(25.6%)	18(14.4%)	7(5.6%)	33(26.4%)	35(28%)	3.52	0.1
6. Extemporaneous Speaking with Diverse Audience	7(5.6%)	4(3.2%)	23(18.4%)	34(27.2%)	57(45.6%)	3.78	0.5
7. Scientific report writing	12(9.6%)	7(5.6%)	13(10.4%)	36(28.8%)	57(45.6%)	3.46	0.5
8. Scientific report writing	46(36.8%)	30(24%)	6(4.8%)	18(14.4%)	25(20%)	5.05	0.1

Note: Mean Scores on a 5-point Likert-type scale where 1=Not confident at all and 5= very confident.

Source: Survey Data, 2019

Potential Programmes to be Offered at the Institute of Adult Education

Other programmes proposed by respondents to be added in the curriculum are summarized in Table 3. Respondents considered Bachelor degree in Entrepreneurship (36%) and Bachelor degree in Mathematics and other Teaching Science Subject (24%), Bachelor degree in Information Technology (IT) (20%) to be most needed programmes. Others were: Bachelor of Arts in Economic Policy Planning (8%), Bachelor of Business Administration (4.8%), Bachelor of Adult Planning and Management (4%) and Bachelor in Mass Communication (3.2%). This suggests that the knowledge acquired from these programmes have high application in the job market.

Table 3: OTHER PROPOSED PROGRAMMES TO BE OFFERED AT THE INSTITUTE OF ADULT EDUCATION (N=125)

	Programmes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship and Adult Educatic	45	36
2.	Bachelor of Arts in Economic Policy Planning	10	8
3.	Bachelor degree in Information Technology	25	20
4.	Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and other Science Subj	30	24
5.	Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)	6	4.8
6.	Bachelor of Adult Planning and Management	5	4
7.	Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication	4	3.2
	Total	125	100

Source: Survey Data, 2019

Discussions

Chaudhary (2015) claimed that, students are the major force driving the shaping and moulding of curriculum content. Student characteristics, skills, interests, and expectations should receive close scrutiny when selecting content for a curriculum (Chaudhary, 2015). It is important to note that curriculum implementation cannot take place without the learner. The learner is therefore the central figure in the curriculum implementation process. The characteristics revealed in this study can help adult education stakeholders and administrators understand some areas of improvement or additions to the curriculum. Harrison (2017) noted, “It is the responsibility of higher education to observe and keep pace with the ever-changing workplace to ensure that they can provide the preparation and skills that produce high quality graduates”.

In general, students felt their courses are giving them the performance outcomes, or experiences, to prepare them for employment, especially the adult and community development courses ($M = 4.93$, $SD = 0.87$). Preparedness for employment relates to self-confidence or self-efficacy, which has been defined as the “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997). From a more global point of view, self-efficacy has been conceptualized as a more general sense by some researchers (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995) which refers to “a global confidence in one’s coping ability across a wide range of demanding or novel situations” (cited in Luszczynska et al., 2005, p. 81). According to Bandura

(1997), lack of confidence or self-efficacy will because workers cannot produce a good performance in carrying out assigned work. From this definition, it can be inferred that students have some level of confidence in their communication skills they have gained at the Institute of Adult Education. The self-reported level of “how well do you feel your courses prepared you for employment?” received a mean score of 3.67(SD = 1.16); however, 4% of the students reported extremely negative feelings towards preparedness, 4.8% had negative feelings, and 3.2% were neutral. This shows potential for improvement. A majority (59%) of respondents stated their primary activity after graduation would be full-time employment, followed by joining with postgraduate courses or professional school (33%). Of the respondents, 20% reported they do not plan to work in the adult education industry (Survey Data, 2019).

Bandura (1977) and Kurbanoglu (2010) identified four specific areas in which individuals judge their efficacy, or confidence: performance outcomes, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal. If one has performed well at a specific task, the individual is more likely to feel competent and perform well in other tasks that are similar (Bandura, 1977 as cited in Redmond, 2010). Respondents reported they felt most confident in English. Specific to adult education, students reported the most confidence in reading Standard English Text and Basic Writing. However, students reported they feel least confident in reading Technical Paper ($M=3.67$, $SD=0.32$), but undergraduate students may not have solid performance outcomes, meaning they have not previously performed well in that subject. Although reading Technical paper is an important component in higher learning Education industry, not all undergraduate students have vicarious experiences in reading Technical Paper, and thus confidence in that area is lacking.

The preferred degree programs proposed by students mostly was Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship and Adult Education. Educational institutions play a major role in the development of early entrepreneurial competencies which later become manifest in the form of entrepreneurial activity. Research indicates that educational institutions as well as the members of the department if are involved in entrepreneurial activity would play an important role in developing entrepreneurial spirit among students through innovative programs and a research oriented culture (Linan & Chen, 2009). As for the integration of entrepreneurship education into higher education, studies (Yemini & Haddad,

2010; Barba-Sánchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2018) stress its importance, so that 21st century universities can become important engines of technological development and economic growth. Research suggests that the nature of work will become less location specific and the global economy will require graduates to have the life skills to live and work within different cultural contexts (Atkin, Rose, Sharp, Hill, Adams & Sayers, 2015; Hounsell, 2011). The results of this study showed that more than 50% (55.2%) of respondents stated that the current IAE programmes are relevant to the stakeholders since it reflects the needs of the community and provide opportunities to many Tanzanians in attaining further education. Therefore, the solution to graduate employment challenges must include better strategies for directly linking degrees to jobs: for example, through paid placements, occupational licensing, and accreditation. Further, academic excellence is a key factor in an ever competitive environment. The employability of the graduates in terms of their employability is ultimately their responsibility individually to equip themselves with the planning and strategies to be gainfully employed. Have employability of graduate for employment is a human resource development issue that merits attention as it affects each graduate differently. This explains that students who have high employability skills will develop their skills and become a good worker. The purpose of this study was to determine if students at the Institute of Adult Education feel well prepared for employment and if they are confident in their communication skills. It also considers how well are the courses at the Institute of Adult Education is preparing undergraduate students for the employment. The paper highlights the relevance of the courses offered at the Institute of Adult Education. The study findings indicated that the courses in adult and community development prepared students most for future jobs. No student had extremely negative feelings about any of the adult or community development courses. Secondly, 52% of the respondents were very confident in communication skills. Respondents considered Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship and Adult Education and Bachelor degree in Mathematics and other Teaching Science Subject, Bachelor degree in Information Technology (IT) to be most needed programmes. Graduate employability and competence development around the world call for strong sense of innovation and collaboration practices to be implemented in higher learning institutions including Tanzania. Failure to equip young people with employability skills has far-reaching consequences.

It must be remembered that employment and employability are not the same thing. Being employed means having a job. For the youth or adults who are not adequately prepared, having a job is likely to be in a temporary condition. Being employable means possessing qualities needed to maintain employment and progress in the workplace. Therefore, HE must ensure that their students are well prepared to enter the labour market. The study recommends that; curriculum revision should always be informed by findings from different studies as well as being guided by assessment for competencies and skills including student's reflections on the curriculum they went through and how much they find it useful/not useful during their learning practices. Further research should be conducted to assess how well students are prepared when entering the workforce. This study should be replicated at other higher learning institutions to determine if these issues are areas of concern nationwide. The relevance of study programmes should be improved by encouraging greater cooperation between HEIs and employers in the design of curricula, and by providing work experience opportunities and internships/fieldwork. The government should support entrepreneurial learning within HEIs so as to maximize the opportunities for graduates to set up their own small high technology businesses.

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