

Chapter 9

Evaluating Diversity in Career Development: Implications for Employability Skills Acquisition in the 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated career diversity and development initiatives using the New World Kirkpatrick Model. Descriptive survey research was used in this study with African university undergraduates and teacher trainees as the study population and target respectively. Data was collected using a validated questionnaire. The scaled response forms were given to university non-teacher trainees and tested for internal consistency. The instrument had a reliability value of 0.715, indicating its reliability and was administered electronically. Descriptive statistics answered non-testable research queries while non-parametric inferential statistics tested hypotheses. Finding revealed that teacher trainees were satisfied with their career diversification and development training, while creativity was the most important employability skill and they could largely use it for decision-making. The moderate influence of student training was significant across locations and educational fields. These findings informed the conclusions made and implications for further studies.

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-4014-1.ch009

BACKGROUND

In contemporary professional landscapes, diversity in career development and training has become essential to fostering inclusivity and ensuring equitable access to opportunities. Making a decision about a future career can be challenging for students. It is possible to feel overwhelmed when trying to make a decision vis-à-vis the prospects of employment after graduation. Also, spending time on professional development is absolutely necessary for long-term success. This is particularly important in the highly volatile career scenery and is relevant for career advancement. Career choice is a portrayal of oneself in the world of work, having identified the specific occupation that one could perform best in relation to one's existing personality traits, and it involves the person's creation of a career pattern, decision-making style, integration of life roles, values expression, and life-role self-concepts (Abubakar, 2018).

The term "career" refers to the accumulation of any and all activities that take place throughout one's time spent working, which is connected to the progression and development of persons within their respective professional fields. Additionally, it is a term that describes the process by which individuals inside an established organisation or professional institution are promoted based on their performance (Huang et al., 2022). Career diversity is a fundamental reality in the 21st century that influences all parts of human lives, including individual growth careers (Conlon, 2004). Individuals search for environments that will let them use their skills and abilities and express their attitudes and values unrestrictedly (Abubakar, 2018). Diversity in career development encompasses various dimensions, including demographic variables such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, career patterns, and education and training initiatives. These inherent dimensions also necessitate acknowledging and valuing differences in experiences, perspectives, and skills among individuals. A person's willingness and capacity to deal with and adjust to changes in their working environment are two of the characteristics that can comprise their career diversity (Zhenjing et al., 2022). Because it has the potential to result in a variety of repercussions for both employers and employees, this component is regarded as essential in the rapidly evolving job market. Creativity is another important skill to be ensured through training such as shown using the purpose-based career coaching as a strategy for increasing employability of graduates (Otu et al., 2023). However, creativity is not typically prioritised because it is typically grouped with other soft skills, such as communication and collaboration. Research is showing that creativity is not just great to have. It is an essential human skill, perhaps even an evolutionary imperative in our technology-driven world (Krueger, 2022; Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023). Creativity is of utmost significance in the field of education because it contributes to the process of an individual's emotional development, and

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