


Chapter 10

Exploration of Career Coaching Programmes for Employability Skills Acquisition

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ABSTRACT

This study explores career coaching programmes in Nigerian universities and their effectiveness in developing employability skills. Through qualitative analysis of interviews with 10 career counsellors, the research identifies available programmes, including guidance and counselling, workshops, mentorship, and institutional support services. The study reveals that these programmes contribute to skill development, particularly in soft skills, technical abilities, and practical experience. However, challenges such as limited awareness and resource constraints hinder their full potential. Career counsellors perceive positive outcomes in areas like self-awareness, communication skills, adaptability, and job search strategies. The research suggests improvements including personalized coaching approaches, integrated skill development modules, continuous feedback mechanisms, enhanced support systems, and leveraging technology. It also highlights the need for industry collaboration and a holistic development focus. While the study demonstrates the positive impact of career coaching on employability skills acquisition, it notes mixed results regarding long-term effectiveness. The findings emphasize the importance of addressing identified challenges and implementing suggested improvements to better equip students for the evolving job market.

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STUDY BACKGROUND

The issue of graduate employability has become increasingly important in Nigeria and globally, as there is growing concern about the mismatch between the skills possessed by university graduates and those required by employers (Okolie et al., 2020). With high unemployment rates among Nigerian youth and graduates, there is a pressing need to enhance the employability skills of students to improve their career prospects (Otu & Sefotho, 2024). Career coaching programmes have emerged as a potential strategy to address this skills gap and prepare students for the competitive job market. Career coaching involves providing guidance, support, and skill development to help individuals make informed career decisions and enhance their employability (Otu, et al., 2023). In the context of higher education, career coaching programmes aim to equip students with the necessary skills, knowledge, and attributes to succeed in their chosen careers (Babatunde, 2018). These programmes can take various forms, including one-on-one coaching sessions, group workshops, and integrated curriculum approaches.

In Nigeria, there is growing recognition of the importance of career coaching and employability skills development in universities. Some institutions have begun implementing career guidance and counselling strategies to promote career decision-making among youth (Babatunde, 2018). However, the effectiveness and availability of such programmes across Nigerian universities remain unclear. Recent studies have highlighted the potential benefits of career coaching approaches in enhancing employability skills. For instance, Otu and Sefotho (2024) found that rational emotive career coaching significantly improved graduates' employability skills in Nigeria. Similarly, purpose-based career coaching has been proposed as a strategy for increasing graduate employability (Otu, et al., 2023). Despite these promising findings, there is limited research on the specific career coaching programmes available in Nigerian universities and their effectiveness in helping students acquire employability skills. Also, the perspectives of career counsellors who implement these programmes have not been extensively explored. Understanding the current state of career coaching programmes, their perceived effectiveness, and potential areas for improvement is vital for enhancing graduate employability in Nigeria. This study aims to address these gaps by exploring the available career coaching programmes in Nigerian universities, examining the experiences and perceptions of career counsellors regarding their effectiveness, and identifying potential improvements to enhance skill acquisition and career success. The findings of this research will contribute to the development of more effective career coaching strategies in Nigerian higher education institutions and ultimately improve graduate employability outcomes.

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