Skills Mismatch among Graduate of Tertiary Education in Nigeria

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Abstract. This paper examined the factors responsible for skills mismatch among graduate of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Using secondary data that were collected from both print materials and online publications. The paper identified weak industry-academia collaboration, weak public institutions, poor investment in tertiary institutions, lack of autonomy of tertiary institutions, lack of effective graduate employability feedback, poor implementation of policies and programme, poor curriculum planning and development and irrelevant courses and outdated curriculum as factors responsible for skills mismatch among Nigerian tertiary institutions graduate. Based on these problems identified, the paper hereby suggested the following. The federal government should declare state of emergency on tertiary education in Nigeria and call for national dialogue on reformation of tertiary education in Nigeria with key areas of funding model, management and supervision. There should be increment in investment to tertiary education in Nigeria. The federal government should direct National universities commission, National Board for Technical Education andNational Commission for Colleges of Education and their respective association of Vice chancellors, Rectors and provost to create a platform to engage and collaborate with major private employer of labour in Nigeria.

Key words. Graduate, Mismatch, Skills, Tertiary Education.

INTRODUCTION

Tertiary education in Nigeria is plagued with many problems and one of these problem is the production of graduates that seem not fit into the economy in term of skills and knowledge for full employment. In 2012, a study was carried out to assess the incidence and extent of skills mismatch among employed university graduates in Nigeria labor market. The findings from the study showed that there were gross inadequacies in the supply of all the skills (except problem-solving skill), as needed by the employers and by extension the labor market. A skill mismatch of 60.6% was identified among recent graduates. Communication, IT, decision-making, critical thinking, interpersonal relationship, and entrepreneurial, technical and numeracy skills were found to be critically deficient (Jobmarketmonitor, 2016).

Similarly, Phillips consulting (2014) using an electronic medium collected data from employers and recently recruited graduate employees. The study revealed that the employers rate the importance of critical and analytical thinking higher than graduates. The employers are satisfied with the graduates employed, especially in the fields of education and agriculture while it was a different story entirely with respect to the employers of graduates in consulting and oil/gas sectors with the major complaints anchored on the graduates' inability to work on their own and lack of critical and analytical skills. One other interesting finding is that the employers rank employability skills such as good attitude and effective communication skills as the most important considerations for graduate recruitment but the graduates are of the belief that their qualifications (academic results) are the most important to the employers (Aiyedun, Olatunde-Aiyedun & Ogunode, 2021).

Also, Stutern's (2016) study on Nigeria is more of a survey but it came up with some interesting findings among which it was discovered that employment appears to favour the most educated graduates and that unemployment is highest among those who possess Ordinary National Diploma (OND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) while it is the lowest among the holders of Master of Business Administration and Doctor of Philosophy. Fifty per cent of Nigerian graduates hold the belief that their graduate training never equips them with communication skills. The survey finds out that the ten most lucrative courses in Nigeria are Computer Science, Economics, Electrical and Electronics, Accounting, Mass Communication, Bio-Chemistry, Computer Engineering, Banking and Finance, Business Administration and Micro-Biology.

In (2021), the LCCI president, represented by Daramola Bamidele, (vice president, LCCI) observed that "they have realised that skill mismatch contributes to persistent worsening of the Nigeria's unemployment situation. "Employers of labour lament about the skill deficiency of job seekers, especially fresh graduates. "The discordance between school curriculum and industry needs affirms why many young people are unemployed,''.

In (2023), Punch report that the Sub-Saharan African Skills and Apprenticeship Stakeholders Network has explained why the Dangote refinery engaged 11,000 skilled workers from India while neglecting youths from Nigeria and other African countries. The network noted that the reason for the neglect was that youths from Nigeria lacked the adequate skills needed to be engaged in the assignment. The Network resolved that each country in Africa develop a national skills qualification framework that will enable ease of labour migration across the continent.

The problem of skills mismatch has been a major problem from the early 1990s in Nigeria. It has been reported that tertiary institutions graduates in Nigeria are poorly prepared for work in recent years. This has implications on the relevance of tertiary education, the employability and productivity of tertiary education graduates nationally and globally. It is based on this that this paper aim to examine factors responsible for mismatch among graduate of tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is hinged on the General System Theory that was developed by David Easton in 1953. The system theory is basically concerned with the problem of relationship, of structure and of interdependence rather than the constant attributes of objects and individuals. The world and all that it is contained is an assembly of small and distinct parts, fit largely for analysis and study in isolation (Laszlo &Kripper, 1997). The system approach focuses attention on the whole and also on the complex interrelationships among its constituent parts. The system theory emphasizes the relationship between parts and interaction with each other. This theory views the organization as a unified whole and purposeful system composed of interrelated parts (Stonner, Freeman, & Gilbert,

2009). The whole is greater than its component parts. A change in any component of a part may affect the entire system functionally or adversely.

The relevance of this theory to the present paper is that, Nigeria as a country or nation is like a system with objectives to realize and sub-system that depend on one another to realize the whole objective of the country. The sub-system include the political, economic, legal system, religious system, the industrial system and educational system. All these sub-system can be regarded as inputs. The inputs are subjected to various processing activities according to their specialization. For instance, in the tertiary education we have teaching, researching and provision of community services, training, assignments, seminars, workshops, publications, studies, supervision, discussion and counselling. As a result, they come out as outputs capable of satisfying the systems aspirations and expectations. The outputs comprised of individuals who are rich in positive values, more learned, well skilled, highly knowledgeable, well cultured, disciplined, employable and productive. But when the inputs are subjected to unethical practices, unstable policies, political influence, brain-drain, strike actions, poor planning, then we have products that are unethical, less qualified and skills mismatch. Skills mismatch product in labour market will not be employed and the implication is high unemployment rate, resources wastages, high economic burden, insecurity and social vices. This will affect the entire country because the country is a system made up of different sub-system. The soundness of all sub-system is the soundness of the country.

Concept of Tertiary Education

National Policy of Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) defined tertiary education as the education given after Post Basic Education in institutions such as Universities and Inter-University Centres such as the Nigeria French Language Village, Nigeria Arabic Language Village, National Institute of Nigerian Languages, institutions such as Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs), and Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, Polytechnics, and other specialized institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health and Technology and the National Teachers' Institutes (NTI).

The goals of tertiary education according to National Policy of Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) shall be to: Contribute to national development through high level manpower training; provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians; provide high quality career counselling and lifelong learning programmes that prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work; reduce skill shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market; promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service; forge and cement national unity; and promote national and international understanding and interaction (NPE, 2013; Ogunode, Iyabode &O latunde-Aiyedun, 2022).

Concept of Skills Mismatch

Skills mismatch refers to gaps between the skills possessed by graduates and those required by employers (Proctor and Dutta, 1995) while employability is the possession of knowledge, aptitudes, skills and other attributes required by employers(British Council, 2014). Vervo (2022) conceptualized skill mismatch as a difference between the skills an employee should have to fulfill a role successfully, and the skills an employee or successful candidate actually has. A skills mismatch can result from a worker's competencies failing to measure up to or exceeding those needed to complete the tasks associated with their role. And it can lead to workers feeling insecure about the

security of their job, career development, and income, resulting in lower productivity, poor quality work, and a loss in revenue. A skill mismatch in the workplace creates a skill gap that can have grave consequences for the performance of a business. From the above, skill mismatch is a difference between the professional skills an employee should have to carry out responsibilities in an institution successfully, and the professional skills an employee or successful candidate actually has. Skills mismatch is it a situation when an employee has not gotten the expected skills required of him or her to execute current and common job responsibilities and tasks within an institutions in a country at a particular time. Skill mismatch is an economic situation whereby the demand and supply of skills in the labour market differ as a result of outdated curriculum of instruction in higher institutions.

Factors Responsible for Mismatch of Skills among Graduate of Tertiary Education in Nigeria.

The following are factors responsible for skills mismatch among Nigerian tertiary institutions graduate. Weak industry-academia collaboration, weak public institutions, poor investment in tertiary institutions, lack of autonomy of tertiary institutions, lack of effective graduate employability feedback, poor implementation of policies and programme, poor curriculum planning and development and irrelevant courses and outdated curriculum

Weak Industry-Academia Collaboration

Weak relationship between managers of tertiary education and private institutions in Nigeria is a major factor responsible for the mismatch of skills among graduate produced in the various tertiary institutions. Tertiary institutions are saddled with responsibilities of producing qualify manpower to fill various positions in the existing and newly established private and public institutions nationally and internationally. The private institutions are profit making institutions that handle productions of goods and services in all aspect of the economy. They are employers of labour. The private and public institutions have a role to employ labour for production of goods and services. Research has it that in advance countries private institutions are the largest employers of labour in the economy. These institutions depending on their products and services required some special skills, knowledge and qualifications that are needed to fill up in the existing or new positions or vacancies created in the institutions as a result of expansion and change in production methods and techniques. It is expected of intending applicants to match the specific skills, knowledge and qualifications of the positions in existence in the various institutions in the economy. It is unfortunate that many graduate of Nigerian tertiary institutions lacks 21st century skills and knowledge to be employed in most of the private institutions particular in Nigeria. This problem of mismatch skills among Nigerian graduate can be linked to weak relationship exiting between private employer of labour in the Nigerian economy and the tertiary institutions managers that has failed to engaged the major private employers on the skills, knowledge and qualifications they need presently and in future. There have been poor engagement and collaboration between the two institutions. Leadership Newspapers (2023) quoted Adewale-Smatt Oyerinde who identified skills mismatch, poor soft skills, limited entrepreneurial skills, lack of practical experience and limited industry-academia collaboration as major factors that hinder successful transition of Nigerian graduates into the workforce in Nigeria.

Weak Public Institutions

The federal and some state government in order to address the problem of graduate unemployment and mismatch of skills among Nigerian graduates established different institutions to help come up with policies and programme to ensure graduate from Nigerian tertiary institutions have the right skills, knowledge, character and qualifications to be fit into the economy. It is

unfortunate that majorities of these public institutions are weak in executing their mandate and programme and this has cause many problem in the country. Ogunode and Akimki, (2023) identified poor funding as a major problem that has prevented public institutions in Nigeria from carrying out their mandate while Ogunode, Ayoko and Orifah, (2023);Ohaeri, Olayinka and Ogunode (2023) lamented the qualifications and competence of the people appointed to head such institutions as weak and not qualified to bring any transformation in the institutions in areas of delivering quality services to the public. Ogunode, Akinyode and Ayoko, (2023); Adams, Zubair and Olatunde-Aiyedun (2022) pointed out that inadequate infrastructure in most of these agencies and institutions are major obstacle that have militated against these institutions from implementing their programme and policies.

Poor Investment in Tertiary Institutions

Poor investment in tertiary institutions in Nigeria has caused many damages to the institutions. Some of these damages include the mismatch of skills among the graduates from the various tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Adequate funding of tertiary institutions in Nigeria is key to addressing various problems confronting the various institutions and specifically, in addressing the challenge of poor quality of graduates in the system. Adequate investment will guarantee employment of adequate academic staff, provision of modern art facilities, effective supervision and prevention of strike actions and brain-drain that has affected the development of tertiary institutions in Nigeria for a long time. Ogunode, Ohunene and Olatunde-Aiyedun (2022) stated that it was unfortunate that the funds needed to ensure provision of quality tertiary institutions in Nigeria is not provided for the various tertiary institutions in the country. Review of ten years education budget in Nigeria indicated that Nigeria has failed to meet up with the UNESCO recommendation of 15% to 20% of annual budget provision. The table below disclosed 2010 to 2021 budgetary allocation to education by federal government of Nigeria. Ogunode, Attah and Ebute, (2023); Ogunode, Onyekachi and Ayoko, (2023); and UNICEF, (2020) study's showed budgetary allocation for the education sector from 2010-2021 below.

Table 1.1

Nigeria Education Spending - Historical Data		
Year	Education Spending (% of GDP)	Annual Change
2021	5.14%	0.01%
2020	5.13%	-0.72%
2019	5.86%	-0.09%
2018	5.94%	-0.18%
2017	6.12%	-0.53%
2016	6.65%	-2.60%
2015	9.26%	0.22%
2014	9.04%	0.36%
2013	8.68%	0.13%
2012	8.55%	0.67%
2011	7.88%	1.71%
2010	6.17%	1.71%

Source: https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/NGA/nigeria/education-spending

From the table 1.1 above, it is clear that of Nigerian education spending for education revealed that from 2021, 2022, 2019,2018,2017,2016,2015,2014,2013,2012,2011 and 2010 the education

International Journal of Business Diplomacy and Economy
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Volume 2, No 8 | Aug - 2023

spending in GDP percentage had 5.14%,5.13%,5.86%,5.94%,6.12%,6.65%,9.26%,9.04%,8.68%,8.55%,7.88% and 6.17%. The inability of the Nigerian government to objectively accept and implement the 15% to 20% funding formula for education recommended by the UNESCO impact negatively on the performance and sustainability of higher education. This is not so in other African Countries like Ghana and South Africa whose yearly investment in education is great. Vanguard report that according to reports by the World Bank, Ghana allocated 23.81% of its national budget to education in 2015, 22.09% in 2016, 20.1% in 2017 and 18.6% in 2018. For South Africa, it has kept increasing allocations to the education sector from R246 billion or 16.7 % in 2018, R310bn in 2019, R387bn in 2020 and projected that it will hit R416bn by 2023/24. The poor investment in tertiary institutions is among the factors that has caused mismatch of skills among Nigerian graduates. This submission is attested to by Ola (2014) Okoli, Ogbondah & Ewor, (2016);Olaleye, & Oyewole, (2016) and Ogunode & Lere (2023) that claimed that poor funding of higher education in Nigeria has militated against the development of quality higher education.

Lack of Autonomy in Tertiary Institutions

Lack of autonomy in tertiary institutions in Nigeria especially among the Universities is another major problem responsible for skills mismatch among tertiary institutions graduate in Nigeria. Majority of tertiary institutions lack the full autonomy to operate in such a way to be effective and realize its objectives. Autonomy helps to bring development in tertiary institutions and helps tertiary institutions realize its objectives. Autonomy helps to bring in quality leaders who has vision to transform the entire institution. Autonomy help to introduce innovation and creativity that has the potential to improve quality in the system. Ajayi (1989) looked at autonomy as the freedom of the institution to make its own decisions on broad complex issues without interference from external or non-university agencies. Autonomy in higher education especially in the universities according to NOUN (2009) implies that each institution must be governed according to the law that establishes it. Every institution has its law, edict or even decree which spells out the functions of the various organs, such as council, senate, congregation, faculty, department and institute etc. Autonomy in higher education relates to the protection of the institutions from interference by government officials in the day-to-day running of the institutions especially on the issues related to the selection of students; the appointment and removal of the academic staff; including the Vice-Chancellors/Rectors/Provost; the determination of contents of higher education and the control of standards. For the University to meet up with global best practices, there must be financial, academic, human resources and administrative autonomy in all aspects of the university's operations known as total or complete autonomy. Autonomy facilitates the university's educational research, teaching and social responsibilities / services. Reasons for university autonomy in Nigeria according to Azenabor (2022), are: it is a traditional right, which has worked over the years. The responsibilities of creating new knowledge through scholarship and research, transmitting and preserving culture, developing the capacity in students for critical and independent judgment, and cultivating aesthetic sensitivities are best carried out in environments free from direct external control and domination. The complexity of academic work requires a fair measure of independence. Autonomy provides for both staff and students checks and balances and better morale in a democratic society. It is unfortunate that most tertiary institutions are denial this right and it has limited the development of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Ola (2014) acknowledge that higher institutions are not given full autonomy to operate. It affects the management and leads to ineffectiveness in the system that could result to poor quality of education. Ogunode & Ibrahim, (2023) concluded that integration of the federal universities into the Integrated Payroll and Personnel

Information System (IPPIS), centralization of the university system, centralization of admission, governing council dominance, poor implementation of the university Autonomy Bill and poor funding model of public universities are the tools used by the Nigerian government to undermine universities autonomy in Nigeria.

Lack of Effective Graduate Employment Feedback

Lack of effective graduate employment feedback unit in majorities of tertiary institutions in Nigeria has also contributed to skills mismatch among graduate of various tertiary institutions across the country. Graduate employment feedback is a policy or programme designed by a higher institutions to monitor and evaluate the employability their graduates in the labour market. Graduate employment feedback is an organized system put in place by higher institutions to check career progress of their graduates in the labour market. It is aimed to ensure wastages in the system and to curtain production of manpower that are not fit into the economy. Normally, every tertiary institutions are supposed to have a functional unit that coordinate graduate employment feedback nationally and internationally. Graduate from each tertiary institutions are supposed to be monitored after graduation on the rate at which they are been employed or been in self-employment and to find out if the knowledge and skills acquired impacted on their lives after graduation. Accurate information and data from these graduate who are now in the labour market will help the various tertiary institutions to re-plan, readjust and develop new curriculum to help improve graduate employability after graduation. It is unfortunate that many public tertiary institutions do not have such unit and if they have, most of the units are not functioning effectively to enable the universities to solve the problem of mismatch of skills among the Nigerian graduates. Sharma, (2023) reported that China in order to address the problem of mismatch and to keep up with changes in industry – particularly emerging technology industries – and the economy, and to better match the relevance of degrees to key industries insisted that provincial education authorities will be required to regularly compile lists of "urgently needed disciplines and majors", and establish a talent demand database, including "industry talent demand forecasts and graduate employment feedback early warnings".Industry will be encouraged to "participate in the revision and implementation of university training programmes," it said.

Poor Implementation of Policies and Programme

Policies and programme that are geared towards ensuring Nigerians graduate from various tertiary institutions are fit and qualify to work nationally and internationally are poorly implemented by the various tertiary institutions and public institutions in charge of such policies and programme. For instance, there is a policy on national digital literacy for implementation in various tertiary institutions to increase digital literacy of students and staff in the various tertiary institutions. All tertiary institutions in Nigeria have programme and policies on entrepreneurship for students with aims of making them self-employed after graduation. The question is, how are these programme and policies well planned, well implemented and well funded? The digital literacy programme supposed to have contributed to employability of Nigerian graduate from tertiary institutions because almost every task today in both public and private institutions requires digital skills and knowledge. The questions was" what is the level of implementation and what is the level of digital skills and knowledge of graduate from Nigerian tertiary institutions?" Ogunode and Ndayebom. (2023) and Ogunode, Obioma and Belloh (2023) concluded that designing policies is not a problem in Nigeria but implementation. Generally, implementation of educational policies have been a major problem in the Nigerian educational system for long.

Poor Curriculum Planning and Development

Poor curriculum planning and development for tertiary institutions has contributed more to the problem of skills mismatch among graduates in Nigeria. When curriculum are planned and developed without full input from the implementer of such curriculum, there is bound to be problem. There is a problem on who to plan and develop curriculum for tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Recently, **The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has kicked against the core curriculum minimum academic standards (CCMAS) developed by the National Universities Commission (NUC).** The **CCMAS —** usually prepared by the NUC, universities, and relevant education stakeholders — stipulates the minimum academic requirements for the training of undergraduates in various programmes. The NUC recently designed CCMAS for 17 programmes in universities across the country. But in a statement, Emmanuel Osodeke, ASUU president, said the process leading to the curriculum threatens university autonomy. Osodeke said the NUC had 70 per cent input in the curriculum while universities — who are statutorily responsible for academic programme development — contributed only 30 per cent. This, according to him, has made "university senates to become mere spectators in their own affairs". The ASUU president added that the curriculum developed by the NUC "left out essential courses in university programmes which would make Nigerian graduates globally uncompetitive!" The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has received several complaints on the threats posed by the Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) to quality university education and the erosion of powers of university Senate in Nigerian universities," the statement reads. "ASUU cannot turn deaf ears to widespread protests against CCMAS. It is inexplicable that the National Universities Commission's (NUC) pre-packaged 70% CCMAS contents are being imposed on the Nigerian University System (NUS); leaving university Senates, who are statutorily responsible for academic programme development, to work on only 30%!"ASUU is not unaware that setting academic standards and assuring quality in the NUS is within the remit of the NUC. Section 10(1) of the Education (National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institutions) Act, Cap E3, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004 enjoins the NUC to lay down the minimum standards for all universities and other degree awarding institutions in the Federation and conduct the accreditation of their degrees and other academic awards."However, the process of generating the standard is as important (if not more important) than what is produced as 'minimum standards'. In this instance, the NUC has recently, through some hazy procedures, churned out CCMAS documents containing 70% curricular contents in seventeen academic fields with little or no inputs from the universities. The academic disciplines covered are: (i) Administration and Management, (ii) Agriculture, (iii) Allied Health Sciences, (iv) Architecture, (v) Arts, (vi) Basic Medical Sciences, (vii) Computing, (viii) Communication and Media Studies, (ix) Education, (x) Engineering and Technology, (xi) Environmental Sciences, (xii) Law, (xiii) Medicine and Dentistry, (xiv) Pharmaceutical Science, (xv) Sciences, (xvi) Social Sciences, and (xvii) Veterinary Medicine."ASUU posited that CCMAS portends serious dangers for quality university education in Nigeria.

Irrelevant Courses and Outdated Curriculum

Some courses or programme offers in tertiary institutions in Nigeria are outdated and are no longer relevant to the revolutionary 21st century economic demand. Olatunde-Aiyedun and Hamma (2023) and Udida etal noted that majority of the output from those programmes lack the knowledge and skills to fit in, into the current global economy that is driven by Artificial Intelligence, and ICT. However, some programmes curriculum needs review and reform to be able to meet up with the digital technological demand. Olatunde-Aiyedun and Ayo (2023) and Udida etal submitted that one of the ways to enhance students learning outcomes was to prepare adequately to curricular and

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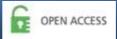
Volume 2, No 8 |
Aug - 2023

content to meet with the goals of higher education in Nigeria and the global challenges is a factor that has impeded system performance and its lack of sustainability. Babalola and Jaiyeoba (2008), identified curriculum renewal as one of the issues of our national strategy for the development of higher education in Nigeria (FME, 2004). Many researchers and Scholars have advocated the repackaging and repositioning of higher institutions and their programmes. Udida etal and Babalola, et al. (2007) pointed out that higher institution should provide researchers – labour market and career based information to prospective students and their parents through publications, seminars, workshops and other informative advertisement. Udida etal (2008) submitted that curriculum is a mirror image of a society and therefore cannot be better or worse than the society it reflects. Sharma, (2023) reported that China has announced a major drive to reform university disciplines and subjects to increase the proportion within the higher education system of programmes on new technologies and priority industries, while culling subjects that do not contribute to the country's goal to become a global science and technology power. Some 10,000 programmes will be added. According to the Ministry of Education, Chinese universities offer degrees in 66,000 majors. Since 2012, they established 17,000 new majors and removed or suspended around 10,000 others. Some 20% of programmes deemed "unfit for socio-economic development" after inspections carried out by provincial education authorities, will be culled, according to the plan. Subjects deemed to be low quality or whose graduates have low employment rates will have to halt enrolment (Sharma, 2023;Ogunode,Olatunde-Aiyedun & Mcbrown, 2022). Under long-standing rules, programmes are eliminated if less than 60% of the graduating students in two successive years fail to find work. As urban unemployment for young people aged 16 to 24 reached a record 19.9% in July 2022 and the number of new university graduates reached an all-time high of more than 10.75 million, provincial authorities have named more disciplines to be axed.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper discussed the factors responsible for skills mismatch among graduate of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The paper concluded that weak industry-academia collaboration, weak public institutions, poor investment in tertiary institutions, lack of autonomy of tertiary institutions, lack of effective graduate employability feedback, poor implementation of policies and programme and poor curriculum planning and development and irrelevant courses and outdated curriculum are factors responsible for skills mismatch among Nigerian tertiary institutions graduate. Based on these problems identified, the paper hereby suggested the following;

i.   The federal government should declare a state of emergency on tertiary education in Nigeria and call for national dialogue on reformation of tertiary education in Nigeria with key areas of funding, modelling, management and supervision. There should be increment in investment to tertiary education in Nigeria.

ii.   The federal government should direct National Universities Commission, National Board for Technical Education and National Commission for Colleges of Education and their respective association of Vice-chancellors, Rectors and Provost to create a platform to engage and collaborate with major private employer of labour in Nigeria such as; Manufacturing Association of Nigeria (MAN), Bankers committee and others. The Director General of MAN called for collaboration between employers and the higher institutions of learning to bridge the gap and foster the overall development of the workforce and the economy. According to him, there is the need to bridge the gap between the needs of industry and products of Nigerian higher institutions to provide work-ready talents, the alignment of education with industry needs which allow higher institutions to align their curricula, training programs and research with the actual needs of the job market. He noted that higher institutions must recognise the critical role of employers as the receiver of their products and

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Volume 2, No 8 | Aug - 2023

should be willing to collaborate to their mutual benefit. He said, "A collaboration between employers and higher institutions creates a symbiotic relationship, where employers gain access to a skilled workforce and talent pool, and educational institutions stay current with industry trends, ensuring that graduates are equipped with the knowledge and skills that employers demand. There is no doubt that the synergy between the NUC, tertiary institutions and the private sector will serve to be effective in cultivating new frontiers in employability research for skills and career in Nigeria".

iii. The national planning commission should be directed to collaborate with tertiary institutions managers and private employers of labour and come up with a national plan to tackle the problem of mismatch of skills in Nigeria.

iv. Autonomy should be given to tertiary institutions especially the universities. This will create competition and emergence of quality leaders.

v. All tertiary institutions in Nigeria should be directed to establish a unit that will handle graduate employment feedback and ensure these units are functioning. This will help tertiary institutions to plan and look inward on their curriculum planning and how to improve its relevance.

vi. National Universities Commission should allow universities to plan, review their curriculum and submit those plan and reviewed curriculum for approval. Emmanuel Osodeke, ASUU president recommended that NUC should encourage universities, as currently being done by the University of Ibadan, to propose innovations for the review of their programmes. Proposals from across universities should then be sieved and synthesised by more competent expert teams to review the existing BMAS documents and/or create new ones as appropriate.

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