



Mass Communication Undergraduates' Perception of their Communication Competence for Employability

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Abstract

This study evaluated the perception of mass communication undergraduates with regard to their communication competence for employability. The population sample includes 2015/16 final year mass communication undergraduates of four Nigerian tertiary institutions, namely; Lagos State University (LASU), University of Lagos (Unilag), Yaba College of Technology (Yabatech) and Lagos state Polytechnic (LASPOTECH). The method of research was survey. A five point Likert scale was adopted. A total of 452 questionnaires were administered but only 405 were usable. Descriptive analysis shows that more than half of the respondents were in moderate range in their general communication competence. The result shows that majority are mostly moderate in the four communication competence contexts (public, meeting, group and dyad) as well as receivers (stranger, acquaintance and friend) contexts. The paper includes; introduction, literature review, methodology, results and discussion as well as, implication and conclusion and recommendation for further studies. The study also discovered that communication apprehension affect communication competence. Therefore, the finding has unlocked the prospect of further studies in this area among mass communication undergraduates in Nigeria for the purpose of assessing their level of communication competence vis-a-vis communication apprehension with implication for employability. However, this paper is limited to the communication competence of the respondents.

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1. Introduction

The desire of all graduates' is to secure immediate employment after graduating from higher institutions. However, the competition in the labour market today is so tense that huge number of graduates still faces the issue of graduate unemployment even years after graduation [3]. This issue of graduate employability has continued to persist as graduate population continues to increase. Graduate employability is dependent upon the attributes employers are demanding for. One of such major attributes that determines whether employers would offer job to a graduate is his/her communication competence [55,38,22]. Archer and Davidson (2008) findings established that employers regard effective communication competence as an important requirement from new graduates; whereas, they discovered that most fresh graduates were unable to display effective communication competence [63]. The Nigerian graduates are also not left out in this respect; they are also faced with similar challenges and this has implication for their employability [47]. By 2015 the youth unemployment rate in Nigeria had gone up to 19 percent [62]. And many of the graduates are unable to obtain jobs due to reasons such as lack of experience, and poor communication competence [16]. Quite a number of employers have discovered that Nigerian graduates even though well trained in their areas of specialization, however, lack the communication competence required to express their knowledge and to advance themselves [52,46,47]. The term communication competence in this study refers to the competence needed to appropriately and effectively communicate [6] information, ideas, views, and opinions in a two-way communication exchange between the speaker and the audience. The competences in question include listening, speaking, and understanding, talking, thinking, and taking part in oral discussions that are essential at the workplace [26]. Employability is the enhancement of competences, capabilities and personal qualities that increases graduates capacities to obtain satisfying and gratifying socio-economic lives, such as employment. Employability applies to various contexts and individuals, to those employed and the unemployed, graduates and undergraduates [56]. It is a person's ability to secure employment ab-initio, sustain employment, change positions within the same establishment, acquire fresh employment if mandatory and possibly obtain appropriate and suitably rewarding job, in other words- their employability is more important than the simple state of being employed [27].

2. Literature review/Theoretical framework

2.1 Communication Competence

Several studies on communication competence have explained how context knowledge, language proficiency, use of language skills, attitude and affection for a specific language constitute important part of communication competence [17,28,50]. Reference [6] proposed a suitable basis for a good understanding of competence in communication and [6] have also identified three separate communication competence dimensions, namely; motivation, knowledge and skill. They considered motivation as a person's orientation as regards approaching or avoiding communication in different social contexts, and see knowledge as a guide that enables individuals to know what to speak and actions to take (in [50]). They argued that knowledge is about understanding the topic, as well as words and their meaning in a given circumstances. Lastly, skill is perceived as one's capability to

engage in discussion, raise and reply to questions. Apart from these the context of communication is also a dependent factor [36,52,50]. Communication competence contexts include Public, Meeting, Group and Dyad. Public communication competence context requires the ability to speak or engage effectively in oral communication with audiences in public situations [20]. Public communication competence is predicated on eloquence and persuasiveness. Meeting, this is another communication competence context in which people gather for a particular purpose to interact on business and issues of mutual concern [20], while Group communication competence context involves small group of people of at least three to twelve or fifteen participants. This means group communication context cannot be less than three and must not be more than fifteen [60]. Group communication context is interpersonal and allows individual exchange of meaning and ideas in form of discussion through participation and contribution [44]. Dyad is the fourth communication competence context. This mainly involves two persons and as well interpersonal and interactive. It could be between two colleagues or superior and his subordinate(s). The word 'inter' means "between", and the word personal refers to person(s). Therefore, Dyad communication context competence literally requires people's personal interaction [43].

The workplace is quite a demanding and dynamic environment in which public, meeting, group, and interpersonal communication takes place. In these contexts, graduates are demanded to exhibit the knowledge of their discipline using communication as a tool. The result is largely predicated upon their competence to appropriately and effectively communicate their knowledge. The workplace environment is described as a place in which individual graduate competence is put to test within relationships that changes continuously in terms of challenges [28]. Both employability and communication theories are synonymous with one another on the basis of competent communication as main components of employability, that employability rests on communication knowledge competence, as well as skills together with personality attributes [41,33,27,59]. Peterson's study in 1997 in the United States concerning personnel interviewers indicate that employers consider communication competence as a very important factor for graduates success for securing employment (see also [53,61]. Many other researchers have also corroborated this finding such as [7,26,40], they found that that employers place premium more on communication competence than graduates technical skills. Communication competence happens to be among the constructs that have correlated with effective performance in the place of employment as found in previous studies [24,6], and also communication apprehension [25 ,34]

2.2. Employability

Employability is generally seen as one of the indicators of the speedy changes that occur in the previous two decades as a result of globalization (cf. [32]). Basically, there are three-dimensions that contributed to it. This includes decrease in industrial production and increase in knowledge based economy in the OECD nations which requires a fresh approach to industry labour. The second is the hegemony of the Neo-Liberal philosophy which made people who were formerly leftists to give a second thought to education and work as the solution to poverty and social marginalisation, and therefore deserted state welfarism system. The third is the idea of deep rooted learning and boundaryless vocations that depict this new world which has interestingly brought about new opportunities for those who could seize it. These factors determine individuals ability to obtain initial employment, retain and assume new positions within same organization, and even acquire new employment

outside the organisation if need be. In fact, employability is more critical than the issue of mere employment [27].

Employability applies to different situations, people and contexts; it refers to those already employed, prospective and current job applicants. However, while it is easier to refer to "employability" using a direct lexical definition, such as, 'the character or nature of being employable', but arriving at a working definition is a more complex exercise. Maybe understandably, it is because employers have considered employability as a fundamental attribute job seekers must possess. According to the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) employability is defined as a person's ownership of qualities and abilities required to meet the changing demands of employers and clients, and along these lines understand his or her own desires and potential in the workplace [12]. Likewise, as a matter of priority of government the UK government defines it as the development of adaptable skills and versatile workforces that all individuals who are fit for work are urged to build and become in terms of technology, Knowledge and skill in order to keep them employed all through their working lives [23] .

Other efforts at defining the construct have resulted in a more and all-encompassing perspective that underscores the effect of both individual's qualities and that of the work economic situations that include the labour demand and supply components. Employability is the relative capability of a person's ability to accomplish gainful employment given the person's circumstances and the labour industry [13]. For the individuals, employability relies upon their knowledge, aptitudes and dispositions and the way they exhibit themselves to employers as having those qualities within a context (e.g. individual circumstances and work market environment in which they are looking for work [27]). All in all, the constant factor in these viewpoints rotate around what individual's require in terms of attributes and "preparation" for work, or factors that affects a man landing a job opportunity or position and moving from one occupation to another, or simply put, factors that enhances employment.

The beginning of the present employability debate is less than a century ago and seven typology of employability have been identified, namely: Dichotomic, Socio-medical, Manpower policy, Flow, Labour market, Initiative and Interactive employability [8,9,10].The latest addition to these is graduate employability. Gazier differentiated between the seven versions and asserted that these seven types can be categorized into three. The first category that emerged was centered on 'dichotomic employability' in the early decades of the 20th century, while the second began around the 1960s, and it includes three different versions, namely: Socio-medical, manpower policy and Flow employability', and the third which originated in the 1980s and developed in the 1990s: comprising of labour market performance employability, initiative employability and interactive employability. However, Gazier observed that a consensus has eventually emerged accepting 'interactive employability' as the definitive conception labour market policy, that defines employability as overcoming a extensive array of obstacles to work confronted by individuals, therefore Gaizer suggested that employability policies should not just focus on individuals. Because, the current application of the concept in labour market policy, as frequently, but not exclusively directed it largely towards individual centred and supply-side components.

2.3 Employability Skills

Employability skills connote vital capabilities required for successful performance at the workplace [5]. According to [14] employability skills are key skills that are transferable. They are a category of skills that constitute important practical knowledge and attitudes which are indispensable in the 21st century place of work. Employability skills examples comprise of communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and work ethic, self-efficacy and so on. Reference [21] Emphasized that “the skills most in demand are least in supply”. This perspective looks at the concept of employability in terms of supply and demand. The demand include; positive attitudes, writing and interpersonal skills, including critical thinking, problem-solving and leadership [21]. Also, [49] asserted that employers are still complaining that fresh graduates merely exit from universities full of theoretical ideas and principles but they are often bereft of ideas, knowledge and experience concerning the workplace, such as decision making, teamwork, independent learning, problem-solving and so on. According to [57] fresh graduates are supposed to enter into the labour force with the ability to “solve complex, multidisciplinary problems, work successfully in teams, and exhibit effective oral and written communication skills, and practice good interpersonal skills”. In a nutshell, there is a ceaseless complains among employers that tertiary institution graduates are ill-equipped for the workforce [48,46,42].

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection

This study is correlational and uses descriptive analysis. Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection; therefore, the study is purely quantitative. The study explored the perception of mass communication final year undergraduates of four Nigerian tertiary institutions, namely: Lagos State University, University of Lagos, Lagos State Polytechnic and Yaba College of Technology. The instrument adopted was [31] McCroskey & McCroskey (2013) Self-Perceived Communication Competence (SPCC) instrument. The responses were measured in ratio scale that ranged from 0 (completely incompetent) to 100 (Competent). Proportionate stratified simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the sample size. And a total of 452 questionnaires were administered while 413 Out of which a total 429 (94%) were returned, 23 (5%) were lost and 16 (4%) were invalid. On this note, total usable questionnaires for the data analysis became 413. So, the total response rate for this study is 91%. Out of this 8 (2%) cases were found to be outliers, leaving a balance of 405 (89%) that is used for analysis in this study were returned. After the data cleaning and screening processes, only 405 (89%) of the total questionnaires distributed were finally used for the analysis.

3.2 Method of Analysis

Reference [54] posit that for better analysis and presentation of data results, it is essential to use tables and graphs where necessary in order to properly organize and summarise the data and present the result. Apart from this, it shows efficiency and makes the work visually acceptable thereby making the result easy to understand, So, the current study employs tables in presenting the result. The result was calculated following [31] method of calculating SPCC result and the software used is the Statistical package for Social sciences (SPSS).

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Respondents' Profile

The respondents profile shows that (64.2%) of the respondents were females. The high rate of female respondents was due to the higher percentage of female students studying mass communication [4,50,45]. Large distributions of the respondents majorly falls between 21- 25 age group constituting 76.5 % (310) of the sample population followed by 26-30 who were 21.2% (86) in number. These two age groups put together constitute above two third of the entire sample. Next to these are 31-35 years who were 1.5 % (6). The last group range from 36years and above and this constitutes 0.7 % (3).

Genderwise the Table 4.4 displays the respondents' percentage in terms of gender. The males are 35.8% (145), while females are 64.2% (260). The total number of students in the final year of the educational institutions sampled as at the time of this study put together was 192 for males and 318 for females, making a total of 510, out of which 452 were sampled and eventually reduced to 405 which is finally used for this analysis. This shows that the educational institutions from which the sample size was drawn had more female students in the final year as at then than the male counterparts. This is the reason why the percentage rate of the male respondents compared to that of female was lower.

Table 4.5 shows the frequency of respondents according to their educational institutions based on the proportionate simple random sampling. A total of 50.86% (206) were from Lagos State University (LASU), while 19.01% (77) were from University of Lagos (UNILAG), 17.03% (69) were from Lagos State Polytechnic (LASPOTECH) and 13.08% (53) were from Yaba College of Technology (YABATECH) respectively.

Table 4.6 shows respondents degree of study frequency of the. B.Sc. is 283 (70%), while HND has 122 (30%) frequency of the total sample.

Table 4.7 reveals frequency of the respondents areas of specialization having Broadcast totaling 147 (36.3%), followed by Journalism which is 105 (25.9%) and Public Relations/Advertising with a frequency of 153 (37.7%) of the total sample used for this study analysis.

4.2 Respondents Communication Competence According Contexts

Table 4.1 shows the mean and standard deviation of respondents according to communication competence contexts. The result indicates that Public context $M = 63.34$ and the $SD = 19.52$. Meeting context $M = 60.29$, while the $SD = 20.52$. Group context $M = 64.09$ and the $SD = 21.33$. Dyad context $M = 66.35$ and the $SD = 19.43$. Stranger $M = 52.74$ and the $SD = 21.09$, Acquaintance $M = 63.27$ and the $SD = 20.96$., Friend $M = 74.55$, while the $SD = 20.37$. The total SPCC score indicate $M = 63.52$ and $SD = 17.29$.

This result reveals that majority of the respondents in this study have moderate communication competence in the basic communication contexts (public, meeting, group and dyad) and receivers (stranger, acquaintance and friend). According to [31], high SPCC should be >87 , while low should be <59 , Therefore, scores falls in

between. In this study, respondents Mean value = 63.52 and this falls between the range indicating moderate communication competence. The result also shows that the respondents are more competent talking with friends than strangers and acquaintances based on the mean score and standard deviation.

Table 4.1: Summary of Respondents Self-Perceived Communication Competence according to Contexts

Contexts	N	Mean	SD
Public	405	63.34	19.52
Meeting	405	60.29	20.33
Group	405	64.09	21.33
Dyad	405	66.35	19.43
Stranger	405	52.74	21.09
Acquaintance	405	63.27	20.96
Friend	405	74.55	20.37
Total SPCC Score	405	63.52	17.29

4.2.1 Public

Self-perceived Communication competence in public context was measured by three items in this study, namely; 1, 8 and 12 of the questionnaire. Table 4.2 shows that, in public context, to present a talk to a group of strangers respondents M = 55.33 and SD = 27.67 and to present a talk to a group of acquaintance M = 70.32 and SD = 26.65. While to present a talk to a group of friends M=64.40 and the SD=26.23.

By and large considering the result of the items in terms of the mean scores and the standard deviation the three comparatively show that majority of the respondents in this context have moderate communication competence.

Table 4.2: Statistics of Respondents Self-perceived Communication Competence to Present stranger, acquaintance, and friends in public (n=405)

Items	N	Mean	SD
Stranger	405	55.33	27.76
Acquaintance	405	70.32	26.65
Friend	405	64.4	26.23

4.2.2 Meeting

Self-perceived Communication competence in formal meeting context was measured by three items in this study, namely; 1, 8 and 12 of the questionnaire. Table 4.3 shows that, to talk in a large meeting of friends respondents $M = 71.51$ and $SD = 26.18$ and to talk in a large meeting of acquaintances $M = 61.21$ and $SD = 27.45$. While to talk in a large meeting of strangers $M = 48.17$ and the $SD = 27.59$.

In summary, the mean and standard deviation scores of the three items show that many of the respondents in this context also have moderate communication competence.

Table 4.3: Statistics of Respondents Self-perceived Communication Competence to Talk in a large meeting of friends, in a large meeting of acquaintances and in a large meeting of strangers (n=405)

Items	N	Mean	SD
Friend	405	71.51	26.18
Acquaintance	405	61.21	27.45
Stranger	405	48.17	27.59

4.2.3 Group

Items 4, 9 and 11 of the questionnaire were used in measuring Self-perceived Communication competence in group context communication competence in this study. Table 4.4 shows that in this context, to talk with small group of strangers, respondents $M = 58.47$ and $SD = 28.39$ and to talk in a small group of acquaintances $M = 61.16$ and $SD = 27.82$. While to talk in small of friends $M = 72.67$ and the $SD = 27.14$.

In conclusion, the results of the mean scores and the standard deviation of the three items show that many of the respondents in this context are as well in the moderate communication competence category.

Table 4.4: Statistics of Respondents Self-perceived Communication Competence to talk in a small group of strangers, acquaintances and Friends (n=405)

Items	N	Mean	SD
Strangers	405	58.47	28.391
Acquaintances	405	61.16	27.823
Friends	405	72.67	27.146

4.2.4 Dyad

Self-perceived Communication competence in dyad context was also measured by three items in this study, namely items 2, 5 and 7 of the questionnaire. Table 4.5 shows that in Dyad context, to talk with an acquaintance respondents $M = 66.35$ and $SD = 26.73$ and to talk with a friend, $M = 83.73$ and $SD = 25.97$. While to talk with a stranger $M = 48.99$ and the $SD = 28.24$. Summarily, the result of the mean scores and standard deviation indicates that many of the respondents in this context are also of moderate communication competence.

Table 4.5: Statistics of Respondents Self-perceived Communication Competence to talk with an acquaintance, friend and stranger (n=405)

Items	N	Mean	SD
Acquaintance	405	66.35	26.736
Friend	405	83.73	25.979
Stranger	405	48.99	28.244

4.2.5 Stranger

Self-perceived Communication competence in stranger context was measured by four items in this study, namely items 1, 4, 7 and 10 of the questionnaire. Table 4.6 shows that in stranger context, to present a talk to a group of strangers respondents $M = 55.33$ and $SD = 27.76$ and to talk in a small group of strangers $M = 58.47$ and $SD = 28.39$. While to talk with a stranger $M = 48.99$ and the $SD = 28.24$ and talk in a large meeting of strangers $M = 48.17$ and the $SD = 27.59$. In view of the results in terms of mean scores and standard deviation, it shows that many of the respondents in this context, similarly, have moderate communication competence.

Table 4.6: Statistics of Respondents Self-perceived Communication Competence to Present a talk to a group of strangers, small group of strangers, with a stranger and large meeting of strangers (n=405)

Items	N	Mean	SD
A Group	405	55.33	27.76
A Small Group	405	58.47	28.39
With a stranger	405	48.99	28.24
Large Meeting	405	48.17	27.59

4.2.6 Acquaintance

Self-perceived communication competence in acquaintance context was also measured by four items in this study, namely items 2, 6, 9 and 12 of the questionnaire. Table 4.7 shows that in Acquaintance context, to talk with an acquaintance respondents $M = 66.35$ and $SD = 26.73$ and to talk in a large meeting of acquaintances $M = 61.21$ and $SD = 27.45$. While to talk in a small group of acquaintances $M = 61.16$ and the $SD = 27.82$ and present a talk to a group of acquaintances $M = 64.40$ and the $SD = 26.23$. In summary, looking at the results, in terms of mean and standard deviation, it shows that many of the respondents in this context have moderate communication competence.

Table 4.7: Statistics of Respondents Self-perceived Communication Competence to talk with an acquaintance, in a large meeting of acquaintances, a small group of acquaintances and a group of acquaintances (n=405)

Items	N	Mean	SD
An acquaintance	405	66.35	26.73
Large meeting of acquaintances	405	61.21	27.45
Small group of acquaintances	405	61.16	27.82
A group of acquaintances	405	64.4	26.23

4.2.7 Friend

Self-perceived communication competence in friend context was also measured by four items in this study, namely items 3, 5, 8 and 11 of the questionnaire. Table 4.8 shows that in Friend context, to Talk in a large meeting of friends respondents $M = 71.51$ and $SD = 26.18$ and to talk with a friend $M = 83.73$ and $SD = 25.97$. While to present a talk to a group of friends $M = 70.32$ and the $SD = 26.65$ and talk in a small group of friends $M = 72.67$ and the $SD = 27.14$. The mean scores and standard deviation of the items reveals that majority of the respondents in this context have moderate communication competence.

Table 4.8: Statistics of Respondents Self-perceived Communication Competence to talk in a large meeting, with a friend, to a group and a small group of friends (n=405)

Items	N	Mean	SD
A large meeting of friends	405	71.51	26.18
With a friend	405	83.73	25.97
A group of friends	405	70.32	26.65
A small group of friends	405	72.67	27.14

4.2.8 SPCC Total Score

The SPCC total score was calculated in this study, with the addition of the sub-scores of stranger, acquaintance and friends divided by 3 ([31] to derive the final score which was used in determining the overall level of respondent’s communication competence. As shown in Table 4.9 the result shows that many of the respondents are of moderate communication competence with M = 63.52.

Table 4.9: Statistics and Percentage of Respondents Self-Perceived Communication Competence (SPCC) Total Score (n=405)

Item	N	Mean	SD
Stranger	405	52.74	21.09
Acquaintance	405	63.27	20.96
Friend	405	74.55	20.37
SPCC Total		190.57	
SPCC Score		63.52	

4.2.9 Level, Frequency and Percentage of Respondents Self-Perceived Communication Competence

Table 4:10 shows the level and number of respondents that fall within each category in terms of low, moderate or high communication competence. Moderate category constitutes more than half of the entire sample size, followed by the low and the high categories. This further indicates that most of the respondents are of moderate communication competence.

Table 4.10: Overall Statistics of Respondents Level, frequency and percentage SPCC

Level	<i>f</i>	%
Low	125	30.9
Moderate	235	58
High	45	11.1
	405	100

Table 4.11 presents the independent-sample t-test conducted to find out if there is any difference in the mean scores of the communication competence of both male and female respondents. The result shows that there is no significant difference. The males had (M = 62.82, SD = 17.81) while the females had (M = 63.92, SD = 17.02; $t(-.615) = 1.47, p = .11$, two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -1.10,

95% CI: -4.63 to 2.42) was very small (eta squared = .006).

Although the mean score of the female is a little higher than the male counterpart, however, the level of significance is .539 which is $p > 0.05$, therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean scores in their level of communication competence.

Table 4.11: Results of independent sample t-test

Construct	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Communication	Male	145	62.82	17.814	1.479
Competence	Female	260	63.92	17.027	1.056

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Communication Competence	Equal variances assumed	.465	.495	-615	403	.539	-1.104	1.794	-4.631	2.424
	Equal variances not assumed			-.607	286.735	.544	-1.104	1.818	-4.681	2.474

In spite of the general statement that females are verbally better communication wise, but the score recorded in this study indicate a slight difference. This can be explicated by the meta-analytical research once conducted by [29], and thereafter by [15] that established that the female has just a slight verbal difference from their male counterpart. Therefore, the difference could be meaningless as observed in this study. Some other studies (e.g. [35,37] among university undergraduates have shown males having better communication competence than females. Meanwhile, the mean scores show males having (M=62.82, SD=17.81) while the females have (M=63.92, SD=17.02). Nevertheless, both are of moderate communication competence.

Two plausible reasons could be adduced for this finding. First is the preponderance of female undergraduate

students in mass communication discipline in Nigeria and the second is communication being the area of specialisation of the respondents, Therefore, as communicators they are at advantage to communicate fairly better than their counterparts in other fields.

5. Conclusion

Findings of this research revealed ample information about mass communication undergraduates' perception of their communication competence for employability. While the limitation includes; use of self-report questionnaire, focus mainly on mass communication undergraduates and the sample drawn only from mass communication undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Lagos, Nigeria, extrapolation of the study is therefore limited. Nevertheless, the study gave an insight into self-perceived communication competence among the respondents. Majority of the respondents perceive themselves as moderate. This result has an implication, for employment as employers can only employ few, and often look for those with high level communication competence. Perhaps, this explains why most graduates fail to secure employment in time. This finding is in line with past studies that found communication competence as employers' major requirement from graduate job applicants [37,59,41]. Although, employers consider technical competence, but, soft skills are equally quite important, otherwise, employees recruited will be one-sided, and as a result the workplace would be robbed of multidimensional or utilitarian workforce, that [18] referred to as protean employees. It is very crucial also that higher institution should constantly get feedbacks from the industry about the graduates they produce, and in order to know what employers are seeking for in terms of quality. This is very important, because, failure to do so will result in graduates with lack of required skills and mostly defective in communication competence. And this will also reveal higher institutions inability to comprehend the industry's requirements. Higher institutions must connect with the industry in order to be abreast of situations and promptly respond to new developments in the sector. It is in this way higher institutions could be proactive rather than be reactionary to emergent changes in the industrial sector. Although, the higher institutions may not actually be able to provide prompt solutions to all issues that emanates from the industry, however, they should be able to offer pragmatic solutions to issues identified earlier, by producing graduates who can meet employers' demands. Universities should embark on curriculum update to reflect the current need of the industry and create awareness among the students on the importance of communication competence in the world of work. The quantitative analysis indicated just slight difference between the male and female respondents. By implication, therefore, employment for both female and male would be competitive. Both need to work harder to improve on their communication competence in order to have a clear edge. The mere notion of female been better than the male would have to be jettisoned. Moreover some employers prefer certain gender to another, partly because of the nature of the vacant job position. But being that as it is employers generally prefer communication competent graduates in both oral and written communication, and those who are confident in themselves and could teamwork with others.

In conclusion, it is essential that tertiary institutions ensure undergraduates acquire the requisite communication competence in their course of study before graduating into the labour market. It is those of them who possess these characteristics that would often get the job, because, they are likely to excel during the job recruitment exercise and would have an edge above others.

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