

Executive Summary

The role of employee's cognitive and non-cognitive skills are essential to employers when facilitating learner transition from training into the workplace (graduate's recruitment for employment). The study focused on determining the role of employee's cognitive and non-cognitive skills when employers' identify and recruit new entrants for their organizations. The main purpose of training students (theoretical and practical), is for them to graduate with the required basic minimum competencies and skills that are essential to enter the workplace and be productive. In the competitive labour environment where there is perpetual unemployment of even graduates', there is a need for a reflection on how both technical skills (cognitive) and personality traits (non-cognitive) affect this transition from a training institution to the workplace.

The study used a qualitative method and applied stratified sampling techniques. The participants for the study were randomly selected. An in-depth discussion guide was used to guide in-depth interviews. Regardless of the levels of cognitive and non-cognitive skills, the study identified employers' bias during the graduates' recruitment process, mainly those biases such as race, age and maturity of these potential employees. This means that regardless of the possession or lack of cognitive and non-cognitive skills, there are certain racial groups of certain age and level of maturity that enjoys priority and privilege of consideration for employment. In addition to these bias tendencies, is the additional bias based on graduates' gender and location. Employers have their own rationale and motivation for this bias practice; they are based on their observations and operational needs. For example, employers find older graduates or employees are more motivated, focused, and committed mainly because they have responsibilities. Their behavior and organizational commitment reflect that they value their work.

As much as both the cognitive and non-cognitive skills are equally important in the workplace, the labour market is favorable to graduates with a background in commerce (accounting), life and natural sciences and mathematics. They are more preferred because they are likely to adapt quickly to most operational and production spaces; this is based on what the skills the economy needs. The study recommends partnership, especially in co-funding graduates, experiential training and orientation of graduates to smoothen their transition. The biases in the race, age,

gender, and maturity is unfortunate and should be discouraged because it constrains organizational diversity which is essential in achieving organizational sustainability and resilience. Improving the diversity of skills and graduates is essential in the development and innovation of the workplace. Lastly, new employee orientation and socialization should not be treated as an event, rather as central to organizational renewal, learning, innovation, and transformation approach. All stakeholders must invest time and money in this process of learner-graduates transition into the workplace.