Awareness and Perception of the Integration of Soft Skill Teaching and Assessment in Economics Curriculum at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria

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Abstract
The rationale or goal of any curriculum is to compliment the development of general knowledge and personal development through guided social inter-learning. The 21st century curriculum therefore requires an all-round development and widening of the learner’s horizon. In exploring the fundamental aspect of the curriculum, academic activities must be complimented with intellectual support activities such as the inculcation of soft skills or transferable skills. This is the reason why the National Universities Commission (NUC), 2007, in Nigeria, introduced the integration of transferable skills in economics curriculum in tertiary institutions. The question to ask now is: how far has the teaching and assessment of these skills being implemented at the premier University- University of Ibadan? This study therefore investigated the awareness and perception of lecturers and students of the integration of soft skills teaching and assessment in economics curriculum, at the University of Ibadan. The study also found out the challenges that faced the implementation, as well as possible solutions to the challenges identified. The study is a survey and expost facto design was adopted since no variable was manipulated. Purposive sampling was used in selecting a cross-section of 200, 300 and 400 level students of economics at the faculties of social sciences and education. The total sample consists of 40 lecturers and 300 students. Two validated instruments developed by the researcher were used to collect data and they are; perception of lecturers on the integration of soft skills teaching and assessment questionnaire (r= 0.78) and perception of students on the integration of soft skills teaching and assessment questionnaire (r= 0.75). Five research questions were answered and descriptive analysis and t-test was used. The results revealed that majority of the respondents are aware that soft skills acquisition is one of the objectives of economics education (62% said yes, 34% said no and only 4% are not sure). Also, findings showed that majority of the respondents do not know what transferable skills are (67% of respondents do not know what transferable skills are). Results also showed that the lecturers’ perception of the integration of soft skills is higher than that of the students (the weighted mean for lecturers was 1.88 while that of students was 1.51). A number of challenges facing the integration of teaching and assessment of soft skills were highlighted and some solutions proffered. It is therefore recommended that seminars and workshops should be organized for lecturers on new pedagogies for teaching soft skills and enabling teaching- learning environment should be put in place.

Keywords: soft skills integration, perception of lecturers and students, economics curriculum.

INTRODUCTION
Research on soft skills acquisition is not new and it was not until very recently that educators and policy makers agreed that they should be explicitly included in academic content standards, directly taught alongside the regular academic curriculum and routinely assessed for all students (Lai, 2012). Despite widespread agreement on their importance, however, there still appears to be disagreement as to which particular skills matter for college and career readiness.

The partnership for 21st century skills (P21) has created a comprehensive framework for conceptualizing different types of skills important for college and the workforce. For example, learning and innovation skills include creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, and communication and collaboration. Information, media and technology skills include information literacy, media literacy and information/communication/technology literacy. Finally, life and career skills include flexibility and adaptability initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability, and leadership and responsibility (Partnership for 21st century skills (P21), 2009).

The National Workforce Center for Emerging Technologies (NWCET), 2001 also explained that soft skills such as communication, problem solving and teamwork are considered critical to success in industry, yet they are often underemphasized in programmes as too difficult to assess. It was also found out that in most courses, the students practices these skills, but that too often the students received little feedback on their performance and few suggestions on how to improve.

Onahamiro, Onuka and Oyekanmi (2014) referred to soft skills as behavioural competencies, interpersonal skills, people-centred skills of personal attributes that enhance an individual’s interactions,
job performance and career prospects. Soft skills are personal characteristics or qualities an individual possess which enable him relate well with people in any organization; be it family, workplace, religious setting, or the society at large. It is apparent that every organisation is interested in retaining employees who possess both hard skills and soft skills in their employ. Obviously, soft skills complement hard skills and are thus, occupational requirements for any job and several other activities in the society.

It is believed that any graduate or employee who cannot get along with others and/or does not have positive attitude, cannot work well as part of a team, and is not able to think creatively and critically, cannot fit well into a workplace, no matter how much talented or physically fit he may be. Perhaps, this is why the University of Ibadan admits all graduates and certified them “in learning and in character”.

Soft skills, according to Aworanti, 2012 is a sociological term relating to a person’s “EQ” (Emotional Intelligence Quotient), the cluster of personality traits, social graces, communication, language, personal habits, friendliness and optimism that characterize relationships with other people. Soft skills complement hard skills part of a person’s IQ, which are the occupational requirements of a job and many other activities. Increased emphasis on soft skills or non-technical skills was a consistent conclusion from many research efforts.

Thacker and Yost (2002), cited in Aworanti (2012) noted that students need to be trained to be effective team members as employers often find that graduates lack good team leadership skills. The ability to work with others and communicate ideas in both verbal and written format is critical to the future employee. Deficiencies in these skills are not only a concern for potential employers and accrediting bodies but also present challenges for further research.

Aworanti (2012) found out from his study that assessment of hard skills contributed about 15% of success in vocations as against soft skills which contributed substantially about 85%. He further said that employee successful performance is at the core of organizational goal attainment and hence soft skills assessment needs to be integrated in public examining of technical and vocational education.

Though it is generally believed that soft skills are inborn skills, but a close examination of these skills could suggest otherwise. Though, some people naturally exhibit soft skills, the skills can also be taught, acquired, nurtured and assessed over time. Examples of soft skills include confidence building, flexibility, honesty, integrity, the ability to see things from different perspectives, optimism and common sense (Onabamiro et al 2014).

To corroborate the importance of soft skills acquisition, Obanya (2015) advocated that, for sustainable education to be entrenched in the 21st century, educational curriculum must merge hard, soft and go-getting skills, which are also called cognitive, emotional and imaginative intelligence.

Research has however shown that despite the fact that teaching and assessing soft skills has become a common place in the western world, they are yet to be embraced in African school setting, including Nigeria (Durowoju and Onuka 2014). Aworanti (2014) asserted that some African Scholars see soft skills as too inherent to be examined while others believe they are not examinable. In the same vein, Asuru and Ogidji (2013) found that some of the challenges of assessing soft skills include teacher incompetency, poor knowledge of test construction and lack of knowledge of how to properly assess soft skills. Researchers have found that teachers who are the major stakeholders and assessors of students’ performance have divergent opinions on the assessment of students’ soft skills.

Since research has established that assessment of soft skills is as important as hard skills and one of the challenges of soft skills assessment in schools has to do with determining the appropriate methods for assessment, it becomes imperative to examine the appropriate methods for assessing soft skills. Assessment of students’ performance consists of wide variety of methods which include teacher-made tests, standardized tests, oral questions, projects, hands-on or practical tests, oral quizzes or examination, direct classroom observations, questionnaires, interview, self-report, inventories, interest scale/inventory, checklist, socio-metric and anecdotal techniques among others (Durowoju 2014 and Onuka 2010).

Galloway, Lippman, Burke, Diener and Gates (2017) asserted that soft skills measurement is still an emerging area of research, and that the land scope of soft skills measurement is varied and fragmented across disciplines. The inventory of measures include self-reports and self-ratings and ratings and observations by others, performance assessments, direct assessment from tests and simulations, including games and mixed methods measures. This therefore showed that there are varied methods to assess soft skills, one system will not suit all disciplines, hence lecturers can decide on which assessment method is most appropriate.

Galloway et al (2017) highlighted a number of methodological challenges that the field of soft skills measures faces, including:
• Balancing technical considerations, such as reliability, validity and measurement invariance.
• Using tools to reliably measure change in skills over time. When measuring a soft skill at a single point in time is itself challenging.
• The prevalence of self-report methods that are known to suffer from biases.
• Developing or adopting tools for use across cultures and contexts with limited resources.
• Lack of implemenetor inclusion in tool design.

It is in the light of the importance of soft skills acquisition and the possibility of it been taught and assessed, that made the National Universities Commission (NUC, 2007) to introduce the teaching of transferable skills into the B.Ed curriculum of students of Economics in Nigeria Universities. The question to ask now is – has these skills been integrated into the curriculum?

The transferable skills, sometimes referred to as soft skills, are those critical strengths talents, qualities and personal attributes that go beyond the job specific skills that you gained in academic classes or internships. They can be acquired in a variety of different settings both on and off campus. They could be developed in class projects, extra-curricular activities sports, volunteer and community service experiences, internships and past work experience. They are qualities, talents and attributes that you naturally possess and they can be acquired as well.

According to University of Southern California, 2013, 5 major transferable skills job seekers or graduates need include; communication, analytical skills, leadership, information management skills, and project management. These skills are needed because the job sector in the 21st century is becoming increasingly competitive with every passing day, and hence job seekers need to broaden their horizons when searching for job.

The topmost transferable skills employers look for are:-
• Communication skills (verbal and written)
• Strong work ethic
• Ability to work in a team
• Leadership
• Initiative
• Interpersonal skills
• Problem solving skills
• Analytical/quantitative skills
• Flexibility/adaptability
• Computer and/or technical skills

These skills are important because they show that you will be a good fit for the team and they also demonstrate what you can bring to a role and how much they have been learnt from previous positions or experiences. This study which is an investigation into the integration of soft skills into the teaching and assessment in economics curriculum is in tandem with the theme of this conference because acquisition of soft skills by both lecturers and students involves building of human capacity in the area of personal abilities that compliment the acquisition of hard skills.

Statement of the Problem
It has been established in literature that the acquisition of soft skills by graduates compliment the attainment of hard skills in various fields of study and it enhances better performance in the world of work. This was the reason why the National Universities Commission (NUC) in Nigeria introduced the integration of soft skills or transferable skills into economics curriculum at the University level some eleven years ago. The study therefore investigated the extent of awareness and perception of the integration of soft skill teaching and assessment in economics curriculum at the University of Ibadan. It also found out the challenges faced during implementation and the solution proffered to the challenges.

Objectives of the Study
1. To find out the extent of awareness of soft skills implementation in economics curriculum at the university of Ibadan.
2. To investigate the perception of lecturers and students of economics of the extent of implementation of the teaching and assessment of soft skills in economics curriculum.
3. To find out challenges faced during implementation and the solution proffered by both lecturers and students of economics.

In the light of the foregoing, five research questions will guide the study:-

Research Questions
(1) What is the extent of awareness of soft skills implementation in Economics Curriculum at the University of Ibadan?
(2) What is the pattern of the respondents knowledge on transferable skills needed in economics education?
(3) What is the difference in the perception of lecturers and students to the integration of soft skills teaching and assessment in the final assessment of Economics students?
(4) What are the likely challenges to be faced in the integration of soft skills teaching and assessment in Economics education?
(5) What are the likely solutions to be proffered to the challenges in RQ4?
METHODOLOGY
Research Design
The study is a survey and it adopted an ex-post facto design.

Population and Sample
The University of Ibadan was used as a case study and lecturers and students of Economics from the Faculties of Social Sciences and Education was used as sample. A total of 40 lecturers and 300 students from a cross-section of 200, 300 and 400 level students was used.

Instrumentation
The researcher developed and used two questionnaires; perception of lecturers on the integration of soft skills teaching and assessment in economic curriculum questionnaire \( r = 0.78 \) and perception of students on integration of soft skills teaching and assessment of economics curriculum questionnaire \( r = 0.75 \). The two questionnaires are made up of two sections – A and B. Section A is on the bio-data of the respondent while section B is a 10 item on knowledge of the extent of awareness of the need for soft skills integration and to solicit the opinion of respondents on the integration of soft skills teaching and assessment in the final performance of students of economics.

Data Collection
The researcher is a lecturer from the Institute of Education, University of Ibadan and two research assistants who are post-graduate students of the University of Ibadan were trained on how to collect the data. The exercise lasted two weeks.

Data Analysis
The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics and t-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Research Question One: What is the extent of soft skill implementation in Economics Curriculum at the University of Ibadan?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Are you aware that soft skills acquisition is one of the objectives of Economics education at the tertiary level</td>
<td>128 (62%)</td>
<td>70 (34%)</td>
<td>8 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Are you aware the Nigeria Universities Commission emphasises the acquisition of analytical skills and transferable skills in Economics education at the tertiary level</td>
<td>89 (43%)</td>
<td>97 (47%)</td>
<td>20 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Are the transferable skills been taught in Economics</td>
<td>111 (54%)</td>
<td>52 (25%)</td>
<td>43 (21%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Result from table 1 revealed that 62% of the participants ticked yes, 34% of the participants ticked no, 4% of the participants are not sure that they are aware that soft skills acquisition is one of the objectives of Economics education at the tertiary level. Moreover, 43% of the participants ticked yes, 47% of the participants ticked no, 10% of the participants are not sure that they are aware that Nigeria Universities Commission emphasises the acquisition of analytical skills and transferable skills in Economics education at the tertiary level. Likewise, 54% of the participants ticked yes, 25% of the participants ticked no, 21% of the participants are not sure that the transferable skills are being taught in Economics. Deducing from the responses of the respondents it can be concluded that majority of the participants are aware that soft skills acquisition is one of the objectives of economics education but they are yet to have the knowledge of soft skills in teaching and learning of economics.

Research Question Two: what is the pattern of the respondents knowledge on transferable skills needed in Economics education?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>67.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Management Skill</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>70.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and Planning Skill</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Investigation Skill</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>71.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skill</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>86.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Relation and Interpersonal Skill</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>88.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking Skill</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>90.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving Skill</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>92.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making Skill</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>94.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Skill</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding the pattern of the participants’ knowledge on transferable skills needed in economics education, it was observed from table 2, that 67% of the participants were not sure, 4% of the participants listed information management skill, 1% of the participants listed design and planning skill 1% o f the participants listed research and investigation skill 15% of the participants listed communication skill 2% of the participants listed human relation and interpersonal skill 2% of the participants listed critical thinking skill 2% of the participants listed problem solving skill 2% of the participants listed decision making skill 5% of the participants listed analytical skill. The results of the responses on the kind of transferable skills needed in economics education showed that majority of respondents do not even know what transferable skills are.

**Research Question Three:** What is the differences in the perception of lecturers and students to the integration of soft skills teaching and assessment in the final assessment of Economics students?

Table 3: Perception of Lecturers and Students to the Integration of Soft Skills Teaching and Assessment in the Final Assessment of Economics Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Lecturers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Are you aware that soft skills acquisition is one of the objectives of Economics education at the tertiary level</td>
<td>128 (62%)</td>
<td>70 (34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Are you aware the NUC emphasises the acquisition of analytical skills and transferable skills in Economics education at the tertiary level</td>
<td>89 (43%)</td>
<td>97 (47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Are the transferable skills been reflected in the final assessment of Economics student's performance</td>
<td>90 (44%)</td>
<td>77 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Are the transferable skills important for effective performance of graduates of Economics in the world of work</td>
<td>165 (80%)</td>
<td>7 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Will you then advocate for the teaching of these skills to Economics students</td>
<td>170 (83%)</td>
<td>4 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Will you support the assessment of these transferable skills in final assessment of performance of Economics students</td>
<td>163 (79%)</td>
<td>9 (4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the comparative analysis of the lecturers and students perception to the integration of soft skills teaching and assessment in the final assessment of economics students, the result implies that both the students and lecturers are in full support of the inculation of these soft skill and the result probably come out in this form may be because of the fact that the lecturers know the importance of these soft skills at securing employment in the world of work than the students.

**Research Question Four:** What are the likely challenges to be faced in the integration of soft skills teaching and assessment in Economics education?

Table 4: Participants Responses on Likely Challenges to be faced in the Integration of Soft Skills Teaching and Assessment in Economics Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Identified Factors</th>
<th>Agreed</th>
<th>Disagreed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Constraint of resources like time, finance and human.</td>
<td>254 (85%)</td>
<td>46 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Training of instructors in new pedagogies that is soft skill oriented.</td>
<td>243 (81%)</td>
<td>57 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>In adequacy of appropriate assessment tools.</td>
<td>289 (96%)</td>
<td>11 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Challenges of measuring soft skills since it may not be measured in quantitative terms.</td>
<td>292 (97%)</td>
<td>8 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Readiness of students to easily adjust to the skills</td>
<td>288 (96%)</td>
<td>12 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Students' attention span to capture the soft skill because of the rigidity of the curriculum.</td>
<td>292 (97%)</td>
<td>8 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Un-conducive teaching and learning environment</td>
<td>288 (96%)</td>
<td>12 (4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result from table 4 revealed that 85% of the participants agreed, 15% of the participants disagreed that constraint of resources like time, finance and human may be one of the likely challenges to be faced in the integration of soft skills into teaching and assessment in economics education. Moreover, 81% of the participants agreed, 19% of the participants disagreed that training of instructors in new pedagogies that is soft skill oriented can pose challenge to the integration of soft skills into teaching and assessment in economics education. Likewise, 96% of the participants agreed, 4% of the participants disagreed that in adequate appropriate assessment tools can pose challenge to the integration of soft skills into teaching and assessment in economics education.
Also, 97% of the participants agreed, 3% of the participants disagreed that it is possible to face the challenge of measuring soft skills since it cannot be measured in quantitative terms. In the same spirit, 96% of the participants agreed, 4% of the participants disagreed that readiness of students to easily adjust to the skills can pose challenge to the integration of soft skills into teaching and assessment in economics education. Besides, 97% of the participants agreed, 3% of the participants disagreed that students’ attention span to capture the soft skill because of the rigidity of the curriculum can pose challenge to the integration of soft skills into teaching and assessment in economics education.

In addition, 96% of the participants agreed, 4% of the participants disagreed that un-conducive teaching and learning environment can pose challenge to the integration of soft skills teaching and assessment in economics education. Deducing from the finding from the responses of the participants it was discovered that the factors identified in Table four are the major challenges to the integration of soft skills into the teaching and assessment in economics education. Since, the number of participants who agreed to the fact that these factors may likely be the bottleneck of effective integration of soft skills in teaching and assessment of economics students is greater compared to the number of participants who disagreed.

Research Question Five: What are the likely solutions to be proffered to the challenges raised?

Table 4: Participants Responses on likely Solutions to be proffered to the Challenges raised

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Identified Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Prioritizing training in new pedagogies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Application of broad-based analytical curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Allocation of appropriate time for teaching-learning process in economics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Periodic review of economics curriculum to include practical teaching of soft skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Seminar and workshop for students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Students should be exposed to the importance of possessing soft skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>There should be practical assessment than theoretical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Introduction of theoretical learning of soft skills in various economics textbooks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following are the likely solution proffered by the participants of the study to the challenges identified that may hinder the integration of soft skills teaching into the content of economics education: Prioritizing training in new pedagogies; application of broad-based analytical curriculum; allocation of appropriate time for teaching-learning process in economics; periodic review of economics curriculum to include practical teaching of soft skills; seminar and workshop for students; students should be exposed to the importance of possessing soft skills; there should be practical assessment than theoretical; provision of enabling teaching-learning environment; introduction of theoretical learning of soft skills in various textbooks develop for economics.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result from this study which reveals that majority of the participants is yet to have the knowledge of soft skills in teaching and learning of economics probably came out in this form because of the specification of the content to be covered by the course facilitators which may not give chance to one on one interaction among the learners and the lecturers. The finding necessitate quick action into the assertion of Thacker and Yost (2002), cited in Aworanti (2012) who noted that students need to be trained to be effective team members as employers often find that graduates lack good team leadership skills. The ability to work with others and communicate ideas in both verbal and written format is critical to the future employee. However, Obanya (2015) advocated that, for sustainable education to be entrenched in the 21st century, educational curriculum must merge hard, soft and go-getting skills, which are also called cognitive, emotional and imaginative intelligence.

Also, Aworanti (2014) asserted that some African Scholars see soft skills as too inherent to be examined while others believe they are not examinable. To expand the knowledge of the people on soft skills and its importance to securing job by the undergraduate in the world of work, Onabamiro, Onuka and Oyekanmi (2014) referred to soft skills as behavioural competencies, interpersonal skills, people-centred skills of personal attributes that enhance an individual’s interactions, job performance and career prospects.

The result from this study reveals that constraint of resources like time, finance and human; training of instructors in new pedagogies that is soft skills oriented; in adequate of appropriate assessment tools; challenges of measuring soft skills since it cannot be measured in quantitative terms; readiness of students to easily adjust to the skills; students’ attention span to capture the soft skill because of the rigidity of the curriculum; un-conducive teaching and learning environment are the major Challenges to be faced in the Integration of Soft Skills teaching and assessment in Economics Education. The result support Asuru and Ogidi (2013) that found out that some of the challenges of assessing soft skills include teacher
incompetency, poor knowledge of test construction and lack of knowledge of how to properly assess soft skills. Researchers have found that teachers who are the major stakeholders and assessors of students’ performance have divergent opinions on the assessment of students’ soft skills. Likewise, Galloway, Lippman, Burke, Diener and Gates (2017) asserted that soft skills measurement is still an emerging area of research, and that the land scope of soft skills measurement is varied and fragmented across disciplines. University of Southern California,(2013), found out that 5 major transferable skills job seekers or graduates need include; communication, analytical skills, leadership, information management skills, and project management.

The result that revealed that lecturers’ perception was higher than students perception implies that the lecturers are in full support of the inculcation of soft skills and the result probably come out in this form because of the fact that the lecturers know the importance of these soft skills at securing employment in the world of work than the students. The finding support the assertion of Miccoli (2003) who asserted that soft skills are a core set of skills and abilities, which can be applied to a wide range of different jobs and industries. They are usually picked up over time, and can be gained from previous positions, charity or voluntary work, your hobbies, or even just at home. Although slightly softer skills than those directly related to a position, transferable skills are incredibly valuable to employers (Miccoli, 2003).

In the same spirit, the result buttresses the assertion of Charbonnier-Voirin and El Akremi (2011) who categorically stated that not only do soft skills show that an individual is fit for the work, this skills can also demonstrate what a candidate can bring to a role, and how much they’ve learnt from previous positions or experiences. Transferable skills can be a great way to highlight why an individual is right for a role, even if such an individual currently lacking experience in that area (Charbonnier-Voirin and El Akremi, 2011).Soft skills, sometimes referred to as transferable skills are those critical strengths, talents, qualities, and personal attributes that go beyond the job specific skills that one can gain in academic classes or internships (Jarrett and Ellis, 2010; Amey, 2005).

CONCLUSION
It could be concluded from the study that majority of the lecturers and students are aware of the inclusion of soft-skills teaching and assessment in the economics curriculum but many of the students do not know what it entails and its teaching and assessment has not been effectively implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS
(1) Review of economics curriculum to include practical teaching of soft skills
(2) Students should be enlightened on the importance of soft skills acquisition
(3) Organization of seminars and workshops for lecturers on new pedagogies for the teaching and assessment of soft skills
(4) Inclusion of theoretical and practical learning of soft skills in economics textbooks for higher institutions
(5) Provision of enabling teaching-learning environment.

Limitations of the study
This study only made use of University of Ibadan as a case study. It could be carried out on a large scale, using Universities from all geo- political zones in Nigeria.

REFERENCES


