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INTRODUCTION

Education expenditure is vital to most economies. Many countries aim to allocate the largest share of their national budget to education with the hope of obtaining high returns. Lately, unemployment among the youth with degrees has been soaring in developing economies such as Botswana. In addition, many successful young entrepreneurs have made a living using their own talents without college training. This raise eyebrows and makes one think- *how relevant are academic degrees in the workplace?* This paper evaluates how contributive a college degree is in the workplace and if it is still necessary to invest in education. This paper is structured as follows. Firstly, an examination of the importance of a university degree in the workplace is discussed. This will be followed by reasons why a college degree is not critical in the work environment. Lastly, a conclusion of the research follows with implications and recommendations.

BENEFITS OF A COLLEGE DEGREE IN THE WORKPLACE

A university degree is usually earned after three to four years of study. The expectation is that after this period of learning, the graduate will be more knowledgeable and possessing a wide range of skills. King (2008) defines learning as a permanent change in behavior that is acquired through experience. Therefore a college degree helps to booster job performance in areas were a university degree is needed. It is important to note that job performance is not

only determined by qualifications (Jones & George, 2007; Bartel et al., 2007). Nonetheless, university graduates usually have fresh ideas and broad perspective. Subsequently they can contribute on a heavy scale. For this reason, a person who possesses multiple degrees usually earns more money than a person without any college training. Important positions such a doctor, engineer, general practitioner and economist need a college degree. However, studies have shown that interviews can predict job performance (Moscoso, 2000; Schmidt & Zimmerman, 2004). Many organizations promote somebody to a higher position considering their educational background. Consequently, governments find it compelling to invest more on education to have high production from the skilled workforce. According to Tracy (2001), individuals should commit themselves to lifelong learning in order to maximize results.

SUCCESS WITHOUT A COLLEGE DEGREE

Academic degrees are flawed in several aspects. Firstly, academic qualifications do not teach important work environment routines such as negotiation, good communication, conflict resolution and how to handle difficult clients. These skills are very important in many positions and are acquired through experience without a degree. Negotiation for instance, depends on several factors such as cultural aspects of the other party (Robbins et al., 2010; Chen et al., 2003). Moreover, psychologists have argued that happiness comes from doing what one loves. Research in industrial psychology further proved that commitment to one's duties is a significant determinant of results in the workplace (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005). Therefore, people who excel in their careers may not necessarily have high educational background but deep passion. Cohen-Charash & Spector (2001) posited that job satisfaction does not depend on one's income. It is important to note

that there are personality effects that can hinder job performance. For example, a PhD scholar may fail to sell insurance if they are not well-spoken. However, a high school student can perform better than the scholar if they outgoing and more sociable. Research has showed that immediate first impression alone may predict whether a salesperson will be productive (Ambady et al., 2006). A university degree is not particularly useful in that case. In accounting ethics, the collapse of large companies such as Enron and WorldCom made history in financial scandals (Duska et al., 2011). These companies were led by qualified degree holders. A college degree does not teach the appropriate moral behavior in the work environment. It is irrelevant in this case.

CONCLUSION

This paper aimed to determine if college education is still relevant in the workplace. A university degree is still valuable to most employers. Recent graduates usually have new ideas which organizations appreciate. However, industrial psychologists put emphasis on commitment and job satisfaction (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). In conclusion of this study, academic qualifications have their merits. However, success in the work environment is not solely based on a college degree. Obtaining a least a bachelor's degree is necessary to have a broad perspective and contribute on a large scale. Nonetheless, that will depend on the individual's willingness to perform at a high level. In summary of the above arguments, high performance in the office will be the result of relevant qualifications, commitment and skills gained through experience. It is recommended that colleges introduce modules as part of each programme which emphasize skills such as: negotiation, conflict resolution techniques, time management and handling customers. College degrees will be more meaningful to organizations if

students do not learn only the theoretical aspects of their programmes. In a nutshell, academic qualifications are still relevant.

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