

Sustained utilisation of acquired entrepreneurial skills among youth in Southwestern Nigeria: National Directorate of Employment's perspective

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurial skills are recognized as veritable tools for reducing youth unemployment in Nigeria. However, for it to produce required effects, the extent to which such skills are sustainably used must be ascertained. This study therefore investigated the sustained utilisation of acquired entrepreneurial skills among youth in Southwestern Nigeria from the perspective of National Directorate of Employment. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select 163 respondents for the study from Ogun and Osun States. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

The results show that respondents had training on poultry production (17.1%), grasscutter production (11.6%) and trading (9.2%) among others. Also 32.5% of the participants did not diversify into any activity while others diversified into activities such as okada riding, trading, sales of recharge cards, barbing, farming, and computer operator while some also got job. Almost all the participants (99.3%) completed the training, about 88.9% were given take off grant or materials and 96.9% had been able to put the learnt skill to use. Sustained utilisation of acquired NDE entrepreneurial skills was high (73.4%).

The study concluded that NDE entrepreneurial skills are sustainably used. It is recommended that the sustainably used components of NDE activities be developed as a package and adapted by organisations engaging in similar training programme.

Keywords: Sustained utilisation, Entrepreneurial skill, NDE, Youth

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is a state where an individual gainfully employs his/her skills, attitude and cognitive abilities to earn a living as well as helping others around him to earn same. Oviawe (2010) noted that entrepreneurship is acquisition of skills and ideas for creating employment for oneself and others. It is the act of starting a company, arranging business ideas and taking risks in order to make a profit through the skills one acquired through education (Omolayo, 2006). Nwangwu (2007) also described it as the process of bringing together the factors of production, namely: land, labour and capital to provide goods or services for public consumption.

The objectives of entrepreneurship education cannot be overemphasized as it focuses on equipping the individual with creative and innovative skills and information towards creating a sustainable life-style, sustainable future, self-reliance and development (Chike-Obi, 2012). This is in tandem with the philosophy of National Directorate of Employment (NDE) which was formed by the Nigerian government to tackle employment problems in both the short and long term perspectives by formulating and administering

job creation as well as entrepreneurship-related training programmes.

The aim of NDE is self-enterprise, which emphasises self-employment and self-reliance in preference to wage employment. In essence, the idea is to create a generation of youth that are sufficiently, functionally skilled, psychologically, educationally and vocationally well equipped with a career focus for sustainable livelihood and poverty reduction. Since its establishment, the skill acquisition aspect of the programme has imparted both agricultural and non-agricultural training skills to unskilled youths thereby putting them into gainful self-employment, while the labour intensive and loan granting activities of the programmes have also engaged many skilled unemployed youth (Toluwase and Omonijo, 2013). Therefore with a comprehensive entrepreneurship education such as offered by NDE in Nigeria, poverty will be eliminated, sustainable growth of the economy will be assured, and the development of many people cannot be contested. Moreover, if Nigerian youths must overcome poverty, they must move beyond entrepreneurial skill acquisition to engaging the skill acquired for profit making, hence ensuring sustainability. It is upon this fulcrum that this study sought the sustainability of entrepreneurial skills

acquired by youth from NDE programme in Southwestern Nigeria. The training skills acquired were identified, the activities diversified to were determined as well as the characteristics of the training received.

METHODOLOGY

The study population consisted of youth participants in NDE vocational skill acquisition programme in Southwestern Nigeria. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select respondents for the study. Osun and Ogun states were randomly selected out of the six states in Southwestern Nigeria. The lists of participants between 2011-2013 were obtained from NDE's office of each state and were stratified along rural/urban dichotomy and age. Simple random sampling was used to select 25% of participants from each state to provide 88 and 75 participants from Osun and Ogun states respectively with a total sample size of 163 respondents for the study.

In order to ascertain sustainable utilisation of entrepreneurial skill acquired by respondents; the composite scores of completion of programme, receipt of take-off grants, still in business and diversification to other activities were standardized and the mean score of 2.9 ± 0.9 was generated. This was used to categorize extent of sustainable utilisation into high and low.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Type of training skills received - The result on Table 1 reveals the various training underwent by respondents in the study area. A larger percentage (17.1%) of respondents had training on poultry production, followed by grasscutter production (11.6%). Others include trading (9.2%), fashion design (8.6%), catering service (8.0%), garri processing (5.5%), computer repair (4.9%), hair dressing (4.3%), aluminium (3.1%) and vulcanising (1.0%).

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by type of training received

| Training | Osun | Ogun | Total |
|--|------------|------------|-------------|
| Poultry | 18 (20.5) | 10 (13.3) | 28 (17.1) |
| Fishery | 6 (6.8) | 8 (10.7) | 14 (8.6) |
| Piggery | 4 (4.5) | 8 (10.7) | 12 (7.4) |
| Grasscutter | 2 (2.3) | 7 (9.3) | 9 (11.6) |
| crop farming | 3 (3.4) | 2 (2.7) | 5 (3.1) |
| Garri processing | 4 (4.5) | 5 (6.7) | 9 (5.5) |
| Horticulture | 1 (1.1) | 0 (0.0) | 1 (1.0) |
| Catering | 9 (10.2) | 4 (5.3) | 13 (8.0) |
| fashion design | 10 (11.4) | 4 (5.3) | 14 (8.6) |
| bag /shoe making | 2 (2.3) | 0 (0.0) | 2 (1.2) |
| Trading | 7 (8.0) | 8 (10.6) | 15 (9.2) |
| Photography | 3 (3.4) | 0 (0.0) | 3 (1.8) |
| Welding | 2 (2.3) | 0 (0.0) | 2 (1.2) |
| computer business/training and repairing | 6 (6.8) | 2 (2.7) | 8 (4.9) |
| house painting | 1 (1.1) | 1 (1.3) | 2 (1.2) |
| hair dressing | 2 (2.3) | 5 (6.7) | 7 (4.3) |
| automobile mechanic | 5 (5.7) | 2 (2.7) | 7 (4.3) |
| candle/soap making | 1 (1.1) | 0 (0.0) | 1 (1.0) |
| Carpentry | 1 (1.1) | 0 (0.0) | 1 (1.0) |
| Vulcanizer | 1 (1.1) | 0 (0.0) | 1 (1.0) |
| Electronic | 0 (0.0) | 4 (5.3) | 4 (2.6) |
| Barbing | 0 (0.0) | 1 (1.3) | 1 (1.0) |
| Aluminium | 0 (0.0) | 5 (6.7) | 5 (3.1) |
| Total | 88 (100.0) | 75 (100.0) | 163 (100.0) |

Source: Field survey, 2018

Activities diversified to by respondents

The result on Table 2 indicates that 32.5% of the participants did not diversify into any activity. While others diversified into activities such as

okada riding, trading, sales of recharge cards, barbing, farming, and computer operator while some also got job. The result further shows that participants in Osun State diversified more into trading (20.5%), this may be as a result of ease of

trading which does not require stringent conditions to start, trading can be engaged in anywhere and at any time with minimum start-up fund. Also 14.9% of the respondents diversified into okada riding, which confirms Okonkwo, Emehute and Nwosu (2010) assertion that the quest for social and economic survival has driven many Nigerian youths into various jobs including riding of commercial motorcycle popularly known as 'okada' business. It is obvious from the result that few participants diversified to vocational trade such

as barbing, painting, aluminium, hairdressing, fashion designing among others. The implication is that in time to come, there will be dearth of skilled workers in some technical vocations due to lack of interest of young people in those vocations. Such vocations include: auto mechanic repairs, bricklaying, plumbing, carpentering, painting, welding, electrical installation and maintenance, agriculture, catering to mention a few (Fatokun, 2015).

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by activities diversified into

| Activities | Osun | Ogun | Total |
|------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| None | 28 (31.8) | 25 (33.3) | 53 (32.5) |
| Okada | 14 (15.9) | 7 (9.3) | 21 (12.9) |
| Online business | 3 (3.4) | 0 (0.0) | 3 (1.8) |
| Trading | 18 (20.5) | 15 (20.0) | 33 (20.2) |
| Sales of recharge card | 6 (6.8) | 12 (16.0) | 18 (11.0) |
| Farming | 3 (3.4) | 8 (10.7) | 11 (6.7) |
| Got a job | 7 (8.0) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (4.3) |
| Catering | 3 (3.4) | 1 (1.3) | 4 (2.5) |
| Soap making | 1 (1.1) | 1 (1.3) | 2 (1.2) |
| Fashion designer | 5 (5.7) | 0 (0.0) | 5 (3.1) |
| Barbing | 0 (0.0) | 1 (1.3) | 1 (1.0) |
| Computer operator | 0 (0.0) | 4 (5.3) | 4 (2.5) |
| Painting | 0 (0.0) | 1 (1.3) | 1 (1.0) |
| Total | 88 (100.0) | 75 (100.0) | 163 (100.0) |

Source: Field survey, 2018

Characteristics of NDE training received

Participants' completion of NDE programme -

The findings in Table 3 reveal that almost all the participants (99.3%) completed the training, the few participants that did not complete the training might have encountered some difficult situations in the course of the training such as unfriendly trainers. They may also abandon the training due to employment opportunities from other sources.

Participants by take-off grant received - Table 3 further shows the distribution of respondents by take-off grants. About 88.9% of the participants were given take-off grants or materials. It is evident from the result that more participants (77.0%) were given take-off grant in Osun state compared to their counterparts in Ogun state (42.7%). Non-financial and financial supports are the most significant contributions to the success of any young entrepreneur. The provision of grants helps young entrepreneurs to guide their businesses, planning, registration and development. However, due to failure to assess funds for productive engagement,

there has been a sustained prevalence of high youth unemployment rate in the country.

Participants' start-up businesses - Also as revealed in Table 3, 96.9% of the participants had been able to put the learnt skill to use in generating income in order to improve their welfare. This is similar to the findings of Adebisi and Oni (2012) who reported that 99.0% trainees responded that they would establish the jobs they were trained for while 100% ex-trainees responded that they were doing the jobs trained for under NDE. Hence the empowerment programme is still relevant.

Participants still in business - Majority (88.3%) of the respondents were still in business as shown in the result on Table 3. The goal of NDE is to ensure that unemployment is reduced to the barest minimum, therefore with the percentage of those who were trained and still in business it is an indication that NDE is achieving its goals.

Participants' diversification to other activities -

The result of distribution of participants by diversification to other activities on Table 4

indicates that more than half of the (57.1%) of the participants diversified into other livelihood activities to complement the skills learnt from NDE in order to improve their poverty status.

Diversification is expected to open up opportunities for multiple sources of income for the participants which can enhance their poverty status.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by characteristics of training received

| Characteristics | Osun | Ogun | Total |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Training Completed | | | |
| Yes | 88(100.0) | 64(85.3) | 152(93.3) |
| No | 0(0.0) | 11(14.7) | 11(6.7) |
| Take-off grant given | | | |
| Yes | 68(77.0) | 32(42.7) | 100(87.6) |
| No | 20(23.0) | 43(57.3) | 63(38.7) |
| Started business | | | |
| Yes | 84(95.5) | 74(98.7) | 158(96.9) |
| No | 4(4.5) | 1(1.3) | 5(3.1) |
| Still in business | | | |
| Yes | 78(88.6) | 66(88.0) | 144(88.3) |
| No | 10(11.4) | 9(12.0) | 19(11.7) |
| Diversified | | | |
| Yes | 43(48.9) | 50(66.7) | 93(57.1) |
| No | 45(51.1) | 25(33.3) | 70(42.9) |
| Total | 88(100.0) | 75(100.0) | 163(100.0) |

Source: Field survey, 2018

Extent of sustained utilisation of skills acquired from NDE

Sustained utilisation of skills acquired by respondents was determined using the completion of NDE programme, take-off grants given, and still in business. The result on Table 4 reflects a high level of sustained utilisation (73.4%) of acquired skills from NDE. The implication is that there was

continuity in the application of the skills learnt by the participants. This is expected to improve their poverty status as a result of the earnings from the businesses and reposition them to the categories of self-employed in the country. This represents Chike-Obi (2012) opinion that entrepreneurship education focuses on equipping individuals with creative and innovative skills and information towards creating a sustainable life-style, sustainable future, self-reliance and development.

Table 4 Categorisation of participants by level of Sustained utilisation of skills acquired from NDE

| Sustainability level | Frequency | Percentage | Mean± SD |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|----------|
| Low extent (1.0-2.9) | 65 | 26.6 | 2.9±0.9 |
| High extent (3.0-4.0) | 179 | 73.4 | |
| Total | 244 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field survey, 2018

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concluded that the entrepreneurial skills acquired from NDE was sustainably used. Participants engaged in grass-cutter production, trading, fashion design, catering service, garri processing, computer repair, hair dressing, aluminium production and vulcanizing. Almost all the participants completed the training, many were given take-off grants and started business. Also majority of the participants were still in business, although many diversified into other activities such as okada riding, trading, sales of recharge cards, barbing, farming, and computer operator. It is recommended that the components that ensured sustainable utilisation of skills acquired from NDE be developed as a package and adapted by organisations engaging in similar training programmes.

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