

An Empirical Evaluation of Entrepreneurship Education - a Case Study of the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro

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Abstract

This paper has been an attempt to assess the delivery of Entrepreneurship Education at the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro. A two-prong approach to the teaching and learning of Entrepreneurship Education consisting of two components has been adopted by the institution. They are namely: theory component and vocational skill acquisition component. A survey was conducted by means of a well-designed questionnaire among the HNDII students, the graduating class, to assess their acceptance or otherwise of the entrepreneurship curriculum. The data collected was subjected to a chi-test. The result obtained revealed that the choices of skill acquisition training made by the students had no relationship with their discipline. The majority chose training in the art of Venue Decoration.

INTRODUCTION

It is no longer news, that our country Nigeria is prostrated by the plague of youth unemployment. The labour market cannot absorb thousands of graduates churned out year-in-year-out by the existing tertiary institutions. An idle hand is the devil's workshop, so says a popular adage; hence it is not surprising that unemployed young ones are engaged in crimes like armed robbery, kidnapping, internet fraud and other acts of economic sabotage. To tackle the problem of youth unemployment, the Federal Government in 2006, directed that Entrepreneurship Education (EEd) be incorporated in all the programmes offered in Higher Educational Institutions (HEEIs) in Nigeria.

In 2007, the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), the supervisory body for Polytechnics and Technical Colleges, commenced organizing of workshops on Entrepreneurship Education for the teaching staff. The NBTE further stipulated that accreditation of programmes in any Polytechnic or Technical College will be based on how well Entrepreneurship Education is delivered.

Entrepreneurship Education is a learning directed at the youths to assist them develop skills, competencies and attributes needed to be innovative and to identify, create, initiate and successfully manage business, work establishments including working for themselves.

The EEd delivery at the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro is divided into two components namely: Theory component which takes 30 percent of the total score and the Vocational Skill Acquisition component taking the remaining 70 percent. At the commencement of EEd training the students were allowed to make a choice out of the following four (4) vocations namely (a) Soap Making (b) Venue Decoration (c) Water Production and (d) Block Moulding and Interlocking Stones production. The facilitators or trainers used were craftsmen or artisans who live by these trades but employed on a part-time basis to impart the skill into our students. However, the number of vocations has now increased to eight, enhancing better latitude for students to select from more vocations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The problem of youth unemployment is a festering wound spreading over the body of world nations. The plague is felt more in developing countries where over 90% of the world's unemployed youths reside. In addition to unemployment, hardships are compounded by poverty, social unrest, wars and other social protection deficiencies (World and regional Trends, 2004). Entrepreneurship Education has become imperative to develop positive attitudes, innovation and skills for self-reliance, rather than the youths depending on the government (Odunaiye, 2010). The education produces graduates with self confidence and capabilities for independent thought to discover new information leading to economic development (Emeraton and Obunadike, 2008). The focus of the government should be the encouragement of the establishment of micro and small scale businesses owned by young entrepreneurs. In South Africa, Rhodes University, Grahamstown under the alpha project provides loans to students (not exceeding \$1,000) for the businesses which they set up and manage over six months as part of their course. The loan is repaid at an interest rate of 9% at the end of the course (Haftendorn and Salzano 2004). In Nigeria, the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS) was introduced by the government in 1987. The NOAS was an attempt to link education, training and workplace. The scheme under the oversight of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in the Ministry of Labour and Productivity provides training for unemployed youths in over 100 occupations.

METHODOLOGY

A survey was conducted by means of questionnaire distributed among HND II students, the first batch of graduating class to undergo the vocational training. Ninety-Nine (99) respondents from the four existing schools returned the duly filled questionnaire this constituting 30% of the participants. The result obtained was subjected to chi-test to determine the influence of the academic discipline of the participants on their choice of vocational training.

RESULTS

TABLE 1: SPREAD OF VOCATION ON SCHOOL BASIS

SCHOOL/FACULTY	VENUE DECORATION	SOAP MAKING	BLOCK MOULDING	WATER PRODUCTION	TOTAL
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES	16	-	-	-	16
MANAGEMENT STUDIES	12	5	1	1	19
ENGINEERING	35	-	2	-	37
APPLIED SCIENCE	15	11	-	1	27
	78	16	3	2	99

TABLE 2: REACTION OF RESPONDENTS TO SKILL ACQUISITION TRAINING

OPINION	NO OF RESPONDENTS (AFFIRMATIVE)	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS
STARTING LIFE WITH TRAINING AQUIRED	97	98
HOPEFUL OF SUCCESS WITH TRAINING ACQUIRED	95	96
BELIEF THAT TRAINING AQUIRED CAN CHECK YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT	96	97

TABLE 3: POPULATION OF STUDENTS VERSUS VOCATION

VOCATION	TOTAL NO OF STUDENTS	%
Venue Decoration	78	78.8
Soap Making	16	16.2
Block Moulding & Interlocking Stone	3	3
Water Production	2	2
TOTAL	99	100%

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

TABLE 1 reflects how the respondents chose their vocations of interest. The table reflects independence of choice and no traits of external influence or pressure. Furthermore, the list of trades in the table requires little start-up capital which a youth can realise through personal savings or financial support from parents. The costliest of the trades is water production which attracted only two (2) of the respondents. In Table 2, the optimism of the respondents to starting off with the skill acquired is commendable. This is an indication that with more commitment by the government and the society towards encouraging Youth Entrepreneurs, the problem of unemployment will abate. Table 3 gives a summary of choice of vocation with Venue Decoration appearing as the most popular vocation, having 78.8% of the respondents. This large percentage can be attributed to societal demand for fun and entertainment. The entertainment industry enjoys an immense patronage, not only in Nigeria but all over the world. Musical artists, event planners and sportsmen are the leading entrepreneurs.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

H₀ – Choice of vocation is influenced by the respondent's course of study

H₁ – Choice of vocation is not influenced by the respondent's course of study

**TABLE 6 - CHOICE OF VOCATION VERSUS COURSE OF STUDY
(OBSERVED FREQUENCES)**

COURSE OF STUDY	CHOICE OF VOCATION				SUB TOTAL
	VENUE DECORATION	SOAP MAKING	BLOCK MOULDING	WATER PRODUCTION	
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES	16	-	-	-	16
MANAGEMENT STUDIES	12	5	1	1	19
ENGINEERING	35	-	2	-	37
APPLIED SCIENCE	15	11	-	1	27
SUB TOTAL	78	16	3	2	99

**TABLE 7 – CHOICE OF VOCATION VERSUS COURSE OF STUDY
(EXPECTED FREQUENCES)**

COURSE OF STUDY	CHOICE OF VOCATION				SUB TOTAL
	VENUE DECORATION	SOAP MAKING	BLOCK MAKING	WATER PRODUCTION	
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES	12.61	2.59	0.48	0.32	16
MANAGEMENT STUDIES	14.97	3.07	0.58	0.32	19
ENGINEERING	29.15	5.98	1.12	0.75	37
APPLIED SCIENCE	21.25	4.36	0.82	0.55	27
SUB TOTAL	78	16	3	2	99

OBSERVED VALUES (O)	EXPECTED VALUES (E)	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² E
16.00	12.61	3.99	11.49	0.91
12	14.91	-2.97	8.82	0.59
35	29.15	5.85	34.22	1.17
15	21.27	-6.27	39.31	1.85
0	2.59	-2.59	6.71	2.59
5	3.09	1.93	3.72	1.21
0	5.98	-5.98	35.76	5.98
11	4.36	6.64	44.09	10.11
0	0.48	-0.48	0.23	0.48
1	0.58	0.42	0.18	0.31
2	1.12	0.88	0.77	0.69
0	0.82	-0.82	0.67	0.82
0	0.32	-0.32	0.10	0.31
1	0.38	0.62	0.38	1.0
0	0.75	-0.75	0.56	0.75
1	0.58	0.42	0.18	0.35

$$\frac{\sum (O-E)^2}{E} = 29.08$$

At 9 degrees of freedom and at 5% upper-critical value the statistical table value is 16.92. The calculated measure of fit 29.08 is larger than the table value; hence there is evidence to reject the null hypothesis. This means that the choice of vocation has no relationship with the course of study.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Having gone this far, it is glaring to appreciate the enormity of youth unemployment. More hands should be on deck to encourage the youths to face squarely the reality of the present time. Gone are the days of white collar jobs, self-employment is the practice in vogue.

Also, the paper recommends the model of Entrepreneurship Education as practiced in the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro to other tertiary institutions. Hands-on-training as delivered by artisans who live by the trade can be very beneficiary; and this, coupled with theoretical instructions on writing business plans and sourcing of funds will assist the young graduates to be successful entrepreneurs.

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