

## **CONFRONTING THE PROBLEMS OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT THROUGH EFFECTIVE CURRICULUM DELIVERY OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION**

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### **Abstract**

The intractable problem of unemployment, mostly affecting the youths ,has changed the socio-economic fortunes of Nigeria. The era when graduates of tertiary institutions had jobs waiting for them before writing their final papers and even relishing the opportunity of making choices between job options has gone. In an attempt to stem the tide of youth unemployment, the Nigerian government embarked on an educational policy that compels the teaching of Entrepreneurship Education in all the tertiary institutions. This paper focuses on the curriculum delivery of entrepreneurship education in the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro ,Nigeria and attempts to investigate how age, as a factor, influences the choice of skill acquisition made by the trainees.

**Keywords:** age, skill acquisition, curriculum delivery

### **INTRODUCTION**

The country Nigeria, in the last few decades, appears to have had more than its fair share of global economic recession. Youth unemployment soars, 40 million of their ranks are unemployed and compounding matters, slump in oil prices have led to the downsizing of workers. The aged members of the society are not spared of the hardships, the African proverb that says, "The aged rat depends on its offspring for feeding" is no longer practical. The esteemed cultural norm obliging the young ones to care for the welfare of their aged parents has become obsolete. In an attempt to confront the attendant effects of youth unemployment, the Federal Government of Nigeria modified the curriculum of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) to incorporate Entrepreneurship Education. The Federal Polytechnic Ilaro, one of the tertiary institutions in Nigeria has embraced a unique strategy of curriculum delivery of Entrepreneurship Education (EEd) which constitutes the main focus of this research. The EEd course is divided into two components namely (i) Theory Component and

(ii) Vocational Skill Acquisition Component. Students for training are allowed to make a choice out of nine available vocations and for effectiveness, facilitators used for the skill acquisition programme are artisans who are self employed and live by the trade.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The high rate of unemployment in Nigeria, can be blamed on the lack of adequate provisions for job creation in the national development plans. The ever expanding educational growth and desperate desire on the part of the youths to acquire university education irrespective of course or course contents has aggravated the problem of unemployment. Consequently, a number of skills acquired from the universities appear dysfunctional and irrelevant (Okafor, 2010). Furthermore, the National University Commission observed that the massive unemployment of university graduates in the country is traceable to the disequilibrium between labour market requirement and lack of employable skills by the graduates. (Diejonah and Orimolade, 1991) Nigeria has a youth population of 80 million representing about 60% of the total population of the country. 64 million youths are unemployed while the remaining 16 million are under-employed. The issue of youth unemployment is a potential time-bomb, a social factor which the opposition can use against the incumbent during elections. For example, in Senegal, the opposition party denounced the intractable problem of youth unemployment and mobilized the youths to protest the policy of the sitting president, President Abdoulaye Wade. At least six people died in the protest but the incumbent president lost the elections in 2012 and was replaced by the opposition party leader Macky Sall (Fair Observer, 2014) Through the provision of a well planned and executed entrepreneurship education the Nigerian youth will learn to be happy and fulfilled as they will be productive and committed as employee or employer of labour (Oviawe, 2010) An effective delivery of entrepreneurship education is one that promotes experiential teaching strategy (Gibbs, 1987) that is, learning by doing. It is this strategy that is well exploited at the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A survey was conducted by means of questionnaires distributed among students and the administration was done during a convocation ceremony. This was to ensure an objective filling of the questionnaires by the respondents. Three hundred and fifty (350) copies were distributed while three hundred and sixteen (316) duly filled questionnaires were returned.

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**RESULTS**

**Table 1:** Choice of vocation by respondents

VOCATION	NO OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Bottled Water Production	22	7
Barbing & Hairdressing	65	20.6
Beads Making& Wire Works	29	9.2
Block Moulding	21	6.6
Venue Decoration	56	17.7
Cell-Phone Repairs	14	4.4
Shoe making	40	12.6
Fashion Designing	25	7.9
Soap Making	34	10.8
Incomplete	10	3.2
TOTAL	316	100

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**Table 2:** Choice of vocation on school basis

SCHOOL	TABLE WATER PRODUCTION	BARBING & HAIRDRESSING	BEADS MAKING & WIRE WORKS	BLOCK MOULDING	VENUE DECORATION	CELL PHONE REPAIRS	SHOE MAKING	FASHION DESIGNING	SOAP MAKING	TOTAL
APPLIED SCIENCE	7	10	11	0	24	5	3	4	11	77
ENGINEERING	6	11	9	12	5	4	25	2	5	81
ENVIRONMENTAL	5	19	5	8	12	4	7	8	5	78
MANAGEMENT STUDIES	4	25	4	1	15	1	5	11	13	80
TOTAL	22	65	29	21	56	14	40	25	34	316

**Table 3:** Age range versus choice of vocation

AGE RANGE	TABLE WATER PRODUCTION	BARBING & HAIRDRESSING	BEADS MAKING & WIRE WORKS	BLOCK MOULDING	VENUE DECORATION	CELL PHONE REPAIRS	SHOE MAKING	FASHION DESIGNING	SOAP MAKING	TOTAL
15-17							2			2
18-20	3	9	3	2	8	5	9	3	6	48
21-23	7	19	13	3	22	6	17	10	13	110
24-26	8	24	7	12	17	2	9	8	7	94
27-29	1	11	5	3	5	1	2	4	5	37
30 & ABOVE	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	6
TOTAL	19	64	29	20	53	14	39	25	34	297

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Table 1 reflects the whole range of available vocations for the training programme. There are nine vocations in all with trades like Barbing & Hairdressing, Venue Decoration and Shoe Making having high patronage among the respondents. The reason is easily understood judging from the waves Entertainment industry makes as a money spinner-it is a multimillion dollar enterprise and the vocations most preferred service the needs of the industry. Also, the trades offered in the training programme require little start-up capital-as little as N50,000 (200USD) thus ensuring a smooth business take-off. This approach is in consonance with the economic realities in Nigeria where accessing bank loans is rigorous and the collateral requirements for loans too stringent for the young graduates to satisfy. The initial capital requirement, which is little can be raised from personal savings or loans from relatives.

Table 2 justifies the opinion that one performs better in occupations outside ones primary discipline. The expectation is that students in the schools of Engineering and Applied Science would populate the Cell-phone Repairs vocation, however, the bulk of the Engineering students are in Shoe Making trade while the students in Applied Science dominate the Venue Decoration profession. Additionally, the policy of the institution is to give the participants freedom of choice of vocation and not coercing anyone into a particular trade.

Table 3 A close look at the table shows that respondents in age brackets 15-17 & 18-20 respectively prefer shoe making vocation more than other trades likewise those in the age brackets 21-23, 24-26 & 27-29 respectively prefer Barbing & Hair Dressing. This makes one suspect whether the age of respondents likely play some role in the choice of vocation selected.

### **TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS**

**H<sub>0</sub>**: Age range does not have an influence on the choice of vocation

**H<sub>1</sub>**: Age range has an influence in the choice of vocation

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**Table 4:** Age range versus choice of vocation  
 (observed frequencies)

AGE RANGE	TABLE WATER PRODUCTION	BARBING & HAIRDRESSING	BEADS MAKING & WIRE WORKS	BLOCK MOULDING	VENUE DECORATION	CELL PHONE REPAIRS	SHOE MAKING	FASHION DESIGNING	SOAP MAKING	TOTAL
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Applying chi-square test to table 3 , the calculated measure of fit at 40 degrees of freedom and 5% upper-critical value is **51.07** while the table value is **55.75**. Since the table value is greater than the calculated value the null hypothesis is rejected meaning that age has an influence on the choice of vocation by the trainees.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Concerted efforts on the part of the government at ensuring an effective curriculum delivery of Entrepreneurship Education should be encouraged. The training should be extended to the lower educational level, the secondary school level and not reserved for the tertiary education as it is presently practiced. Early awareness of taking up the challenge of self-employment as opposed to waiting endlessly for paid employment should be inculcated in the youths. Counseling is also needed to assist the youths to cultivate the can do spirit and choose vocations in which they are better talented.

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