



CHALLENGES OF EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS OF UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES IN AKKO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, GOMBE STATE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of acquiring entrepreneurial skills not even only for undergraduates is to secure a living or self-reliance using creative talent to establish a venture that will ensure and sustain growth of wealth in the entrepreneur personal economic and the country at large. This is not possible to the developing entrepreneurs' consequent to a certain number of challenges that affect the effective utilization of such skills which attributed to unemployment and redundancy among undergraduates. This study aimed at identifying the challenges to effective utilization of entrepreneurial skills of unemployed graduates in Akko local government area Gombe state. A structured questionnaire was used with five Likert scale using mean and standard deviation and the norm to accept or reject an item at 03.00 level of significance. The research study was carried out in Akko local government area in Gombe State. The target population consists of 230 unemployed graduates who undergo skills acquisition and empowerment Development (SAED) program in NYSC Camp. The findings revealed that item higher mean scores 4.3-4.81 and 3.66-4.86 within level of significance 3.00. It was discovered that that lack of capital, lack of mentoring and guidance, too much dependence on government employment among others are among the challenges facing the unemployed graduates to carry out effective entrepreneurship in their various destinations. It was recommended that Private organizations and Gombe State Government should come up with a specific program to support the unemployed undergraduates, authorities also should provide simplified access to fund at reliable financial agencies, the unemployed graduates entrepreneurs should as much as possible obtain a start-up capital for the venture and must not depend on government for employment among others.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, Challenges, Unemployed, graduates, Utilization*

1.0 Introduction

The Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development was birthed as a result of the gland step Nigerian government took in 2012 in an attempt to reverse the crippling hands of unemployment in the country by introducing the Skill and Entrepreneurship Acquisition (SAED) program in the NYSC. However, the core aim of this idea was supposed to build the concept of entrepreneurship in the youth and thus build their skills and business sense. Since its introduction, the SAED program has left an immense impact in the lives of some corps members. There are experiences of corps members who started a living with this, others who do not have to spend money on buying certain products but can now produce them on their own, and have helped to save some expenses in their family budget since they can produce these things at home.

Many have learned a lot of valuable skills that remain with them forever (Eguegu, 2016). Entrepreneur is a process that is carried out by entrepreneurs who see opportunities where others see problems and chaos Benjamin and Onyeizugbe (2013).

To Luisa, Teresa and Odia and Odia (2013) supported the view when they noted that the need for the growth of entrepreneurial activities in Nigeria has led to the inclusion of entrepreneurship education for all students across the tertiary institutions. They further noted that in the narrow sense, this education is designed to develop students' competencies and entrepreneurial intention in starting and sustaining their own business for job creation. Ojelfor in Adaku and Clement (2016) opines that an Entrepreneur is an enterprising individual who builds capital through risk and for initiative. Ojeifor added that entrepreneur as the owner or the manager of business enterprise who through risks and initiative, attempts to make a profit. Adegbite in Orheruata and Mutah (2016) opines entrepreneur as "one who undertakes innovations, finance and business acumen in an effort to transform innovations into economics goods". In the same vein, Ani and Ezeh in Orheruata and Mutah (2016) opines that any attempt to create wealth and recognize the value of business opportunities and ability to take risk is an entrepreneur, Benjamin and Onyelzugbe (2013) opined that entrepreneur is a process that is carried out by entrepreneurs who see opportunities where others see problems and chaos. To Luisa, Teresa and Pedro quoting the words of Drunker (1985) noted that entrepreneurship is "not magic, not mysterious, and has nothing to do with the genes, It is a discipline and like any other discipline, it can be learned" while Akhuemonkhan (2005) defined entrepreneur as a person who has the ability to identify and evaluate business opportunity in the environment, gather resources to take advantage of the business opportunities and initiate appropriate action to ensure success. This definition can be viewed as an individual whose ability is to identify business opportunities in the environment in order to become self-reliant and succeed in his Endeavour.

Oduma (2012) asserted that entrepreneurship involves creation of value through fusion of capital, risk taking, technology and human talent. While Osuale (2004) and Ademuluyi (2009) opined that entrepreneurship is the ability to generate business ideas, innovation and diversification as well as bear risk. They further indicated that these are combined with management and organizational skills which are put together thereby using people, money and resources to create wealth. However, in their study, Uglegbe et al (2008) noted that the concept and scope of entrepreneurship can better be understood when we examine some definitions of entrepreneurs. The entrepreneur is seen as a person who organizes and manages any enterprise especially business and he is the innovator of new ideas and business process. While the Wikipedia, 2017 describes entrepreneur as managing business bears the risk and rewards. Kayode (2006) opined that entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on the identifiable opportunities. This can simply deduce that there are a lot of opportunities for the individual in terms of establishing an enterprise as well as investment. But the only thing for them is to identify those opportunities. Ifeanacho and Ifeanacho (2014) stated that entrepreneurship has been used as a strategy to solve societal problems of employment, poverty and unbalanced technological development. Entrepreneurship is a necessary Ingredient for catalyzing economic growth and employment opportunities in all societies through the formation of business enterprise. Going by Ifeanacho's definition, it was revealed that entrepreneurship has been used as a tool to cater societal problems of youth's restiveness, alleviating poverty as a result of unemployment. Karki (2007) described entrepreneurship as an action, process or activity that create a stock of capital, from legal, institutional and social forces. While Adegbite (2007) stated that, entrepreneurship is associated with the coordination of productive resources, the introduction of technology innovation the provision of technical know-how. Entrepreneurship involves identifying

opportunities within the economic system, generation and developing of business ideas and bringing a vision to life. Entrepreneurship is all about recognition, pursuit of opportunities and putting necessary parameters in place to achieve a predetermined business objectives. Osuala (2004) and Ademuluyi (2009) opine that entrepreneurship is the ability to generate business ideas, innovation and diversification as well as bear risk. They further indicated that these are combined with management and organizational skills which are put together thereby using people, money and resources to create wealth. However, in their study, Ugiegbe et al (2008) noted that the concept and scope of entrepreneurship can better be understood when we examine some definitions of entrepreneurs. The entrepreneur is seen as a person who organizes and manages any enterprise especially business and he is the innovator of new ideas and business process.

Entrepreneur is one who assumes the responsibility and the risk for a business operation with the expectation of making a profit. The entrepreneur generally decides on the product, acquires the facilities, and brings together the labour force, capital, and production materials. If the business succeeds, the entrepreneur reaps the reward of profits; if it fails, he or she takes the loss. In his writings, the Austrian American economist Schumpeter stressed the role of the entrepreneur as an innovator, the person who develops a new product, a new market, or a new means of production. One important example was Henry Ford. In the industrialized economies of the late 20th century, giant corporations and conglomerates have largely replaced the individual owner-operator. There is still a place for the entrepreneur, however, in small businesses as well as in the developing economies of the Third World nations. In spite of its potential disadvantage, adopting an encompassing definition would assist other fields of endeavour such as the arts, science and social development, which seek to apply concepts from the field of entrepreneurship. A few of these applications include Intentions, opportunities and entrepreneurial capacity. (Microsoft Encarta, 2009) Kayode (2006) opined that entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an Individual to seek out investment and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on the Identifiable opportunities. This can simply deduce that there are a lot of opportunities for the individual in terms of establishing an enterprise as well as investment. But the only thing for them is to identify those opportunities.

Ifeanacho and Ifeanacho (2014) stated that entrepreneurship has been used as a strategy to solve societal problems of employment, poverty and unbalanced technological development. Entrepreneurship is a necessary ingredient for catalyzing economic growth and employment opportunities in all societies through the formation of business enterprise. Going by Ifeanacho's definition, it was revealed that entrepreneurship has been used as a tool to cater societal problems of youth's restiveness, alleviating poverty as a result of unemployment. Karki (2007) described entrepreneurship as an action, process or activity that create a stock of capital, from legal, institutional and social forces. While Adegbite (2007) stated that, entrepreneurship is associated with the coordination of productive resources, the introduction of technology innovation the provision of technical know-how. Entrepreneurship Involves identifying opportunities within the economic system, generation and developing of business ideas and bringing a vision to life. Entrepreneurship is all about recognition, pursuit of opportunities and putting necessary parameters in place to achieve a predetermined business objectives.

In addition, Gibb (2007) as cited Abdulkarim, outlined four basic objective of any effective entrepreneurship education: To give the students an understanding on how opportunity for enterprise creation at micro and small level are recognized and evaluated; to create in the students the capacity to start a new venture of their own; to develop the recipients the general understanding of business and to develop in the students personal enterprising capacity.

Araba (2013) emphasized the need to involve stakeholders inside and outside of higher education institutions in the development of entrepreneurs with the requisite knowledge, skills, attitude and experience for success, although, collaboration with host communities has been seen in different aspect of our education system, such as placement for students' Industrial Work Experience. But the problems facing this program are lack of clear and well defined ventures that are specifically relevant to students' profession. The essence of this program is to equip the graduates with knowledge and skills in order for them to sustain themselves after graduation. But in an Ideal situation, the choice is always the students' concern. Majority of the unemployed graduates in Akko Educational Zone are not utilizing the skills for self-reliance. Hence the need for this study. It was against this background the researcher developed the motivation to find out the bedeviling challenges to effective utilization of entrepreneurial skill of unemployed graduates in Akko Educational Zone.

3.0 Methodology

The descriptive statistic was used to analyze the data using Mean and Standard deviation to answer the research questions. For any of the research question to be accepted its grand mean must not be less than 3.00 otherwise rejected. The research was guided by two research questions. The instrument designed to collect data was the 20-Item structured questionnaire which was adopted by the researcher from the original scale and has only one section which was designed to elicit information that is related to the research questions. The research study was carried out in four local government areas in Akko Educational Zone. The target population consists of 230 unemployed graduates who undergo SAED training in NYSC. This was to ascertain the validity of the Instrument before administering to the target respondents, as well as the suitability of the Instrument in terms of relevance of content, avoiding ambiguity in the item statement and to ensure appropriateness of the rating scales adopted, and the statistics applied in analyzing the research questions. Some errors were detected and pointed out by validates and all were noted and corrected.

Research Question 1 Mean rating and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on skills acquired by unemployed graduates from SAED program In NYSC Camp for self- reliance in Akko Educational Zone, Gombe State?

| S/N | Statement | No | X | SD | DECISION |
|-----|------------------------------|-----|------|------|----------|
| 1. | Electric installation skills | 230 | 4.47 | 1.56 | Agree |
| 2. | Cosmetology skills | 230 | 4.61 | 1.73 | Agree |
| 3. | Jewelries making skills | 230 | 4.33 | 1.08 | Agree |
| 4. | Bakery skills | 230 | 4.75 | 2.05 | Agree |
| 5. | Catering skills | 230 | 4.81 | 2.15 | Agree |
| 6. | Tailoring skills | 230 | 4.55 | 1.62 | Agree |
| 7. | Agro Allied skills | 230 | 4.43 | 1.53 | Agree |

Source: **Administration Questionnaire, 2024***

Table 1 above shows that items 1-7 with a higher mean scores 4.3-4.81 indicated that they are the entrepreneurial skills acquired by the unemployed graduates. This is because the scores are up to 3.00 which represent the level of significance. Therefore, the respondents agreed all

the items as the skills acquired during SAED program by the unemployed graduate in NYSC camp.

Question 2: Mean rating and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on challenges to effective utilization of entrepreneurial skills acquire by unemployed graduates for self- reliance In Akko Educational Zone.

| S/n | Statement | No. | X | SD | Decision |
|-----|--|-----|------|------|----------|
| 1. | Global Economic Meltdown | 230 | 3.66 | 2.67 | Agree |
| 2. | Lack of specific Government program for supporting the young graduates | 230 | 4.27 | 2.83 | Agree |
| 3. | Difficulties to obtain a loan to operate the venture | 230 | 2.36 | 2.08 | Disagree |
| 4. | Lack of capital to start up | 230 | 2.18 | 2.05 | Disagree |
| 5. | Lack of Initiative to operate the business | 230 | 4.48 | 1.15 | Agree |
| 6. | Lack of business planning | 230 | 2.59 | 2.62 | Disagree |
| 7. | Phobia of facing competitions by the bigger companies/ventures | 230 | 4.75 | 2.53 | Agree |
| 8. | Low motivation and lack of confidence | 230 | 4.48 | 2.44 | Agree |
| 9. | Raw materials and marketing problems | 230 | 4.51 | 1.53 | Agree |
| 10. | Too much dependence on government | 230 | 2.77 | 2.91 | Agree |
| 11. | Too many competitors in the market | 230 | 2.86 | 1.58 | Disagree |
| 12. | Lack of mentoring and guidance | 230 | 4.76 | 2.66 | Agree |
| 13. | Lack of commitment on the part of the entrepreneurs (graduates) | 230 | 2.18 | 2.53 | disagree |

Source: Administered Questionnaire, 2024

Table two above reveals that Items 8, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16 and 19 with higher mean scores 3.66 4.86 Indicated that they are the challenges to effective utilization of entrepreneurial skills of the unemployed graduates for self-reliance. This is because the scores are up to 3.00 which is the level of significance. While items 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 18 and 20 with a mean scores lower than 3.00; 2.18 2.777 were disagreed because their mean scores were below level of significance. Therefore, the respondents agreed all the items as the challenges to effective utilization of entrepreneurial skills of unemployed graduates in Akko Educational Zone, Gombe State.

4.0 Discussion of Findings

The result of the analysis in research question one, shows that, unemployed graduates, must continue to practice acquired skills in the items 1-7. This is inconsonant with Ezeahurukwe and Ameh (2016), who listed almost all the items on the table in the research they conducted as entrepreneurial opportunities in SAED program: There are different categories of these skills offered in this SAED program according to NYSC (2024): NYSC SAED: Agro-allied. This section of the SAED program partners with organizations involved in large-scale production, processing, and packaging of food using modern equipment and methods. They are usually involved in education and training interested corps members in the skills in processing and packaging of food. It can really be an invaluable skill to acquire with the recent trend toward food processing and packaging. NYSC SAED: Automobile. In the section of automobile, organizations such as driving schools can be contacted within the state to help corps members

learn the skills of driving. A lot of corps members find themselves interested in this section which I feel it is very useful for every graduate to learn. NYSC SAED: Beautification. In a large sense, beautification involves making visual improvements to a person, place, or thing the SAED program in the orientation camp, it is common to see beauticians who would teach corps members preliminary phases of embellishing pictures, artworks, and the sort. NYSC SAED: Construction: This is more of the building and construction sector.

Some of the training in this section might include bricklaying, the building of houses, the building of roads, and others like it. It can really be an interesting course for some corps members. NYSC SAED: Cosmetology; the SAED works hand in hand with experts involved in the care of hair and makeup as well as skincare and products. This training may include services such as coloring, extensions, and straightening. Interested corps members can learn useful skills in improving and perfecting the hairstyle of clients. With the new knowledge of the corps members can make a business out of styling hair for weddings, proms, and other special events in addition to routine hair styling. NYSC SAED: Culture and tourism; the culture and tourism section is interested in educating students on how to make a business from culture and tourism. Culture and tourism happen to be placing importance on the artworks, relics and attractive centers of a community that raise the interest of the tourist. Good knowledge of the business is vital If a person wants to embark on It. NYSC SAED: Film and photography; in the film and photography section, the organization involved is usually into teaching corps members how to operate video cameras and photo cameras. To be able to produce excellent film and videos requires an art that needs to be acquired and that is what these bodies are interested in teaching corps members. NYSC SAED: Food Processing/Preservation: This section covers technologies involved in food processing and preservation. Corp members interested in this are taught by organizations on the modern technologies, and ways to use them in food processing and preservation and how to make a business out of it.

While the result on research question two revealed that all e-learning items ranging from Items 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 17, and 20 are the challenge to effective utilization of entrepreneurial skills of unemployed graduates for self-reliance in Akko Educational Zone. This finding is in line with the effort of Ammani, Abdulhadi and Hassan (2019), who listed most of the challenges as the impending factors in tertiary institutions in Gombe State.

5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, therefore, the challenges bedeviled the effective utilization of unemployed graduates for self-reliance in Akko Educational Zone are those challenges ranging from global economic meltdown, lack of capital, lack of mentoring and guidance, lack of commitment among others. Due to the urgent need for self-reliance, the startup capital should be made available and accessible for the graduates. This would help boost the Nigerian economic and commercial, and business sectors and make it possible for those that could not be able to start practicing the business ventures in their environment. As such, would increase the number of literate who could be professional in various fields. It might be difficult to start an entrepreneurship without principal capital. Finally, the success or failure for the graduates to utilize the SAED entrepreneurial skills they acquired depend solemnly and purely on the availability and accessibility of funds, to realize the goal and objectives of the program.

5.1 Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the researcher proffers the following recommendations below:

1. Gombe State Government should come with a specific program to support the young graduates.

2. Private organizations should provide simplified ways of obtaining soft loan at financial agencies.
3. Unemployed graduate's entrepreneurs should as much as possible to endeavor to obtain a start-up capital for the venture.
4. Entrepreneurs should Initiate and plan the business ventures accordingly.
5. The state Government should as well provide necessary raw materials and eliminate marketing related confusions for the entrepreneurs.
6. Graduates should strive not to depend so much on government employment.
7. Government at all levels should continue as a matter of urgency to support unemployed graduates with kinds or cash at subsidize rate.

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