

## ***Counsellors' Perception towards Entrepreneurship Education for Skilful Employment of Nigerian Youths***

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### **Abstract**

*The study, guided by three research objectives, investigated counsellor's perception towards entrepreneurship education for skilful employment of Nigerian youths. The population of the study comprised 70 counsellors in public secondary schools in Onitsha metropolis. The population was used as sample because of its manageable size, hence there was no sampling. A structured questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurship Education for Youth Employment (EEYE)" designed by the researchers with a reliability coefficient of 0.89 was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis. Results of the study revealed that counsellors perceived the acquisition of technical, managerial and personal skills as the entrepreneurial skills needed to be acquired by Nigerian youths in order to be gainfully employed. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that teachers should be trained by experts in entrepreneurship education through organizing counselling career day, orientation seminars and workshops on effective ways of educating the youths at the secondary schools and tertiary levels of education to acquire the right entrepreneurial education so as to be gainfully employed.*

**Keywords:** counsellors, entrepreneurship, education, skills, youths, employment

## **Introduction**

One of the most devastating problems confronting Nigeria today as a nation is unemployment. This problem has given rise to many social vices such as banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, drug trafficking, prostitution, and more recently suicide bombing, among others. Adamu (2010) realizing these problems, said that Nigeria is bedevilled by the problems of unemployment especially among youths who prefer white collar jobs after graduation. The problems facing youth are many, most of who depend solely on government to provide white collar jobs that are not in existence, instead of being self-reliant or self-employed. The industrial health of a society depends on the levels of entrepreneurship in such society. A country might remain backward not because of lack of natural resources or dearth of capital but because of lack of entrepreneurial talents or its inability to tap the latent entrepreneurial talents existing in that society (Sharma,1990). However, with the rising population growing at geometric proportion relative to job placement that is growing at arithmetic progression, it became obvious that the nation's formal education is fueling unemployment, crime, and cycle of poverty as graduates could not be absorbed.

The counsellor is one who is professionally trained to handle people's problems in any broad areas of guidance which include educational, vocational and socio-personal. Sowemino (2015) referred to counsellor as one who utilizes both individual and group counselling to shape and re-mould students in Nigeria from their academic, vocational and social-problem. Obunadike (2013) declared that when youth are properly guided and counselled as well as equipped with entrepreneurial skills, their over dependency on government for employment will reduce and they will become more of employers of labour than job seekers. A counsellor according to Ifelunni (1997), is a trained expert who is exposed to enough psychological concepts necessary to understand and predict human nature and behaviours. He went further to indicate that a school counsellor is a school personnel who is trained in test construction and administration, supervision of practicum exercise as well as good knowledge of psychological and counselling theories needed for better understanding of clients so as to proffer solutions. Counsellors are primarily saddled with the responsibility of facilitating a total and holistic development of individuals who will be useful to themselves and society.

Counsellors' roles, according to Denga (2001), involve counselling, planning, and developing of Guidance programmes, appraising, interpreting and making appropriate referrals to relevant specialists on problems and issues that fall outside their competence. Other roles of counsellors include researching, organizing programmes such as orientation, career day, conferences and workshops. It is also worthy to note that there are qualities of ideal counsellors. According to Obikezie and Umezuruike (2008), a counsellor is to be reckoned with due to his skills, techniques and

competencies, and must possess qualities which invariably reveal his personality. Personal qualities of a counsellor are as follows: the quality of unconditional acceptance, counsellors' empathic quality, quality of sense of humour, the quality of communication competence, the counsellor should be concrete, the counsellor should be emotionally stable, the counsellor should be human-oriented since man is the centre point in counselling, the quality of genuineness, humaneness, sincerity and openness and the quality of flexibility.

An entrepreneur is one who undertakes innovations, finance and possesses business acumen in an effort to achieve something meaningful. According to Nzeribe (1996), an entrepreneur is an employee who left his employers to establish his own business based on the knowledge he acquired in his employment or rational ties made during employment. The entrepreneur is one who chooses or assumes risks, identifies business opportunities, gathers resources, initiates and establishes an organization or enterprise to meet such demand or market opportunities (Anyakoha, 2006). These definitions show that the entrepreneur is seen as an independent, self-sufficient individual who is willing to face whatever comes up as a result of the decision being taken. In line with the above, an entrepreneur is also one who is dissatisfied with present method and would want to strike at obstacles and make the best opportunities (Ochuba, 2015).

Nwajiaku (2015) listed characteristics of an entrepreneur which include vision, creativity, honesty, discipline, intelligence, energy and resourcefulness, hardworking, drive, self-confidence and risk bearing. It means he (entrepreneur) perceives business opportunities and takes advantage of them by proper and efficient utilization of his resources, bears the non-insurable risks in his business and directs all resources (men, material, machines and money) in an exceptional way to achieve his business objectives. He is an originator of business ideas, a business visionary and manager. Entrepreneurship skills comprise of technical and managerial skills which are needed for self-employment and self-reliance (Idio, 2010). According to Zubaidiah (2006), technical skills include being able to communicate, creative thinking, problem solving and organizational skills.

Therefore, to qualify as an entrepreneur, it is not sufficient to be a business man, just by managerial activities of planning, organizing, controlling, directing and co-ordinating an enterprise but to be prepared to risk personal energy and resources to achieve unpredictable result. Entrepreneurship leads to the development of small, medium and sometimes large scale business based on creativity and innovation. Egbo (2009) in his view stated that entrepreneurship involves perception and identification of business opportunities, decision on the location of the enterprise, innovation, which

involves creative response to an opportunity, risk bearing of all uninsurable risks and management of the ongoing organization.

Education remains the surest path to realizing individuals' potentials and societal growth. Education serves many purposes in the society which include preparing individual for citizenship, cultivating skilled workforce, teaching cultural literacy as well as helping the youths to become great thinkers (Gayi, 2007). Nwabuisi (2000) defines education as deliberate, systematic and sustained efforts to transmit, evoke or acquire knowledge, value, attitude, skills and sensibilities. Therefore, it requires functional education to be adaptable to the future and to function with the skills and competences needed in the globalized world. Without functional education, the certificates students earn on graduation become mere pieces of paper. The Nigerian National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) stated that for education to be functional, it has to be relevant and practical; and acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of competencies as equipment for individual to live and contribute to the society should be embedded in education. This is an indication that there is need to inculcate in the students the skills and competencies necessary for self-reliance thus contributing to national development. Entrepreneurship education is an important tool for achieving the objectives of preparing students for the 21st century labour market. It provides students with the knowledge, skills, and innovation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings (Nwekeaku, 2013).

Igwe (2008) emphasized that entrepreneurship education is the types of education that equip the citizens (youths) with the right training and motivation they need to be self-reliant and job creators thereby reducing unemployment among youths. Entrepreneurship Education is oriented toward diverse ways of maximizing opportunities and potentials. It is always there to furnish the youth with knowledge, accomplishments and motivations (Ayaste, 2011). A nation like Nigeria is among the developing countries of the world and she cannot overlook the importance of entrepreneurship education in generating employment for her teeming unemployed youths. According to Paul (2005) and Ojeifo (2013) cited in Ayaste (2013), the objectives of entrepreneurship education include the following:

1. To function as an avenue for increase and evolution of the economic system
2. To assist in providing risk management training for graduates
3. To provide functional education for the youth which could guarantee self-employment and self-orientation
4. To lower rural-urban migration
5. To drive into the youth some elements of perseverance for them to succeed in their business pursuit
6. To give fresh graduates enough training to make career in small and medium sized business

7. To create a smooth transition from traditional to modern industrial economy.

Notwithstanding the objectives of entrepreneurship education for unemployed youth in Nigeria, the Nigerian entrepreneurship education, according to Ayaste (2013), is poor in content which makes the undergraduates' youth to grasp with it because of its challenges. The challenges of entrepreneurship education were enumerated such as:

1. No provision of vocational centers for skill acquisition for rural and urban youth
2. There are no data bank for entrepreneurship education
3. Constant political and administrative corruption in conjunction with non-availability of social agreement on micro economic policies
4. Administrative and trade bottle necks inhibit human development and the provision of technical assistance.

From these objectives and challenges listed above, it is clear that entrepreneurship education is designed to make youths acquire the relevant skills to become wealthy through entrepreneurial preparation as well as becoming self-employed, self-sustaining, self-reliant and skillfully employed. According to Kwami (2009), 50 percent of total urban employment can be accounted for jobs created in the small-scale enterprise sector. In line with the above, an important question comes to mind, can we increase the supply of entrepreneurs that is, self-employed persons as a tool for re-branding Nigeria? This is possible through Entrepreneurship Education. Therefore, with these, there is need to determine counsellors' perception towards entrepreneurship education for skilful employment of Nigerian youths.

### **Statement of the problem**

The increasing rate of unemployment, poverty, banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, child trafficking, cyber-crime and other sundry crimes among youth have been attributed to lack of entrepreneurial education. Many youths are ignorant and do not possess the skills that will prepare and enable them establish and manage small business enterprises to become skillfully employed and self-reliant on graduation. These problems have necessitated the importance of counsellors, who are professionally trained, to render guidance services among which are career information and other activities which will enable them expand their career knowledge, skills, aptitudes, abilities and attitudes towards entrepreneurship. Common knowledge holds that individuals derive more satisfaction when they make their own livelihood. Counsellors exposing the teeming unemployed youth to the present reality of the world of work therefore become a necessary task to be done. It requires a sensitization on the different job opportunities available, appropriate training and skills required for such jobs. This sensitization should be handled by professional career counsellors through orientation, career day, conferences, seminars and workshops

services. This study is aimed at determining counsellors' perception towards entrepreneurship education for skilful employment of Nigerian youths.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1) What is counsellors' perception on acquisition of entrepreneurial technical skills for skilful employment of Nigerian youths?
- 2) What is counsellors' perception on acquisition of entrepreneurial managerial skills for skilful employment in Nigeria?
- 3) What is the counsellors' perception on acquisition of entrepreneurial interpersonal skills for skilful employment of Nigerian youths?

### **Methodology**

This study made use of descriptive survey design. The study area was Onitsha metropolis. The population of the study comprised 70 counsellors in public secondary schools in Onitsha metropolis. The population was used as a sample because of its manageable size, hence there was no sampling. A structured questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurship Education for Youth Employment (EEYE)" designed by the researchers was used for data collection. The researchers distributed 20 copies of the questionnaire to counsellors in Nnewi Metropolis, which is outside the area of the study. After collection, their responses were subjected to a test of internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha statistics which yielded a coefficient of 0.89. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis. The instrument was scored on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (4-points), Agree (3-points), Disagree (2-points) and Strongly Disagree (1-point). A mean score of 2.5 and above was accepted as agreed while a mean score below 2.5 was rejected as disagreed. That is, on a four point rating scale:  $4+3+2+1=10$ .  $10/4=2.5$ .

### **Presentation of results**

**Research question 1:** What is counsellors' perception on acquisition of entrepreneurial technical skills for skilful employment of Nigerian youths?

**Table 1:** Mean ratings of counsellors’ perception on entrepreneurial education for youth’s acquisition of technical skills for skilful employment

S/N	Items	N	Mean	S.D	Decision
<i>Entrepreneurship education will help the youths to acquire the following technical skills</i>					
1	Being innovative	70	3.58	0.52	Agree
2	Ability to initiate change that will yield result	70	3.51	0.56	Agree
3	Ability to take risk	70	3.69	0.49	Agree
4	Seeking meaningful opportunities	70	3.43	0.53	Agree
5	Being visionary in leadership	70	3.43	0.59	Agree

Results in Table 1 showed that counsellors agreed that entrepreneurship education will help Nigerian youths to acquire technical skills for skilful employment as indicated across items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 with mean score of 3.58, 3.51, 3.69, 3.43 and 3.43. By implication, the counsellors perceive technical skills as entrepreneurial skills that need to be acquired to be employable or self-employed in Nigeria.

**Research question 2:** What is counsellors’ perception on acquisition of entrepreneurial managerial skills for skilful employment in Nigeria?

**Table 2:** Mean ratings of counsellors’ perception on entrepreneurial education for youth’s acquisition of management skills for skilful employment.

S/N	Items	N	Mean	S.D	Decision
<i>Entrepreneurship education will help the youths to acquire the following management skills</i>					
6	Ability to plan and set realizable goals	70	3.60	0.49	Agree
7	Ability to analyze and evaluate tasks	70	3.61	0.49	Agree
8	Being effective in decision making	70	3.56	0.53	Agree
9	Efficient knowledge in marketing	70	3.47	0.53	Agree
10	Good knowledge in financial analysis	70	3.67	0.47	Agree

Result on Table 2 showed that majority of the counsellors agreed that entrepreneurship education will help Nigerian youths acquire management skills for skilful employment. These items are 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 with mean value of 3.60, 3.61, 3.56, 3.47 and 3.67 respectively. By implication, this means that counsellors perceive management skills as entrepreneurial skills that youths should acquire to be self-reliant or financially independent.

**Research question 3:** What is the counsellors' perception of acquisition on entrepreneurial inter-personal skills for skilful employment of Nigerian youths?

**Table 3:** Mean ratings of counsellors' perception on entrepreneurship education for youth's acquisition of inter-personal skills for skilful employment.

S/N	Items	N	Mean	S.D	Decision
<i>Entrepreneurship education will help the youths acquire the following interpersonal skills</i>					
11	Effective interaction with people	70	3.57	0.53	Agree
12	Ability to negotiate productivity	70	3.57	0.53	Agree
13	Ability to organize oneself and business	70	3.35	0.51	Agree
14	Ability to build a network of associate of businesses	70	3.43	0.58	Agree

Results on Table 3 showed that a good majority of counsellors agreed that entrepreneurship education will help Nigerian youths acquire inter-personal skills for skilful employment. These items are 11, 12, 13 and 14 with mean scores of 3.57, 3.57, 3.35, and 3.43. By implication, the counsellors perceive inter-personal skills as entrepreneurship skill that the youths need to acquire to be employable or self-employed in Nigeria.

### **Discussions of findings**

The first finding of the study indicates that counsellors considered ability to be innovative, initiation of change, taking the rightful and result oriented risks, seeking for opportunities and being a visionary leader as entrepreneurial skills for skilful employment of Nigerian youths. This agrees with the work of Zubaidiah (2006) who opined that technical skills include being able to communicate, creative thinking, problem solving and organizational skills. The result indicates that with these technical skills, Nigerian youth will be employable, self –employed and employers of labour, thereby boosting the economy of the nation, as well as leading to reduction in the nation's rate of unemployment.

The second finding indicated that the counsellors agreed that through entrepreneurship education Nigerian youths can acquire the following managerial skills: ability to plan and get results, ability to analyze and evaluate market opportunities, ability to make effective decisions, being knowledgeable in marketing and efficient in financial analysis for skilful employment. This implies that through entrepreneurship education, Nigerian youths will be able to acquire the necessary managerial skills for employment and also being self-employed.

The third finding from this study revealed that through entrepreneurship education, Nigerian youths will acquire inter-personal skills such as effective interaction with people, ability to negotiate business, ability to organize properly and build a network of associates in business for skilful employment.

The implication of these findings is that entrepreneurship education encourages massive youth employment as it would enable the youth to acquire the rightful technical, managerial and inter-personal skills that are essential for employment in the labour markets as well as being self-reliant. Counsellors' affirmation to these is indicative of the need for entrepreneurial education at the secondary and tertiary levels, as it would help in preparing the youths for life after school. With the envisaged results, the high rate of employment among Nigerian youths will reduce.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it was revealed that entrepreneurship education is a proven qualitative education to aid in the fight against youth unemployment. It also revealed that through entrepreneurship education, youth will acquire the technical, managerial and inter-personal skills to enhance sustainable livelihood and national development. Issue of youth unemployment can be minimized through self-employment. Therefore, entrepreneurship education should be vigorously pursued to equip the young ones with skills and zeal to own business. Therefore, with skills acquired through entrepreneurship education, rate of social vices such as kidnapping, arson, terrorism, armed-robbery, cultism, unemployment will be minimized to the barest minimum in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

The study makes the following recommendations:

- 1) Government through federal and state ministries of education should, as a matter of urgency, prioritize counselling in schools for effective guidance and counselling for the students.
- 2) Teachers should be trained by experts in entrepreneurship education through seminars and workshops on effective ways of educating the youths, at the secondary and tertiary levels of education, to acquire the right entrepreneurship education so as to be skillfully employed.
- 3) Students should be compelled to choose entrepreneurship education as a compulsory subject and course of study at the secondary and tertiary levels of education since it is a gateway for youth employment.
- 4) Mass media like radio, television and newspapers should assist counsellors in disseminating career information.

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