

Challenges to Effective Utilization of Entrepreneurial Skills of Unemployed Graduates in Damaturu Yobe State, Nigeria

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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 skills required by unemployed graduate for self-reliance and the challenges to effective utilization of entrepreneurial skills of unemployed graduates in Damaturu Educational Zone. The research study was carried out in four local government areas in Damaturu Educational Zone. The target population consists of 230 unemployed graduates who undergo skills acquisition and empowerment Development (SAED) program in NYSC Camp. A structured questionnaire was used. Finding reveals 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 use entrepreneurship skills effectively in their various destinations. It was recommended that some of the business organizations and Yobe State Government should come up with a novel way to support the unemployed graduates with grant for start-ups, private sectors and authorities should also 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 from funding institutions and must not depend on government for employment among others.

Keywords: Challenges, Entrepreneurship, Graduates, Unemployed, Utilization

Introduction

The Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development was birthed as a result of the giant 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. 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 corp 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.

Concept of Entrepreneurship

Egugu (2016) asserted that entrepreneurship involves creation of value through fusion of capital, risk taking, technology and human talent. 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, Ugiegbe et al (2008) noted that the concept and scope of entrepreneurship can better be understood when we examine some definitions of entrepreneurs. 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 predetermine 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). 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.

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Concept of Entrepreneur

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.

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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 endeavor 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).

In addition, Gibb (2007) as cited Abdulkarim, outlined four basic objectives 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.

The essence of the SAED 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. But the problems facing the SAED program and self-reliance are lack of clear and well defined ventures that are specifically relevant to students' profession.

Majority of the unemployed graduates in Damaturu 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 Damaturu Educational Zone.

Challenges of SAED NYSC Program for Unemployed Graduate

The major challenges of the SAED program are inadequate finance for corps Empowerment, which include skill and entrepreneurial training facilities, business start-ups capital, access to mentorship as well as insufficient bilateral and multilateral collaborations. Oghenevwede (2023), stated that the Director General of the National Youth service corps (NYSC), Brig. Gen. Shuaibu Ibrahim, has identified inadequate funding as the major challenge hampering the scheme's skills Acquisition and entrepreneurship Development (SAED) program. Adenike Adeyemi (2022) quoted that despite paucity of funds, the scheme has recorded tremendous success in the implementation of the program.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Identify the skills acquired by unemployed graduates from SAED program in NYSC Camp for self-reliance in Damaturu Educational Zone, Yobe State
2. Identify challenges for effective utilization of entrepreneurial skills of unemployed graduates for self-reliance in Damaturu Educational Zone.

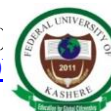
Research Questions

The study was guided by three formulated research questions derived from the objectives of the study. These are;

1. What are the skills acquired by unemployed graduates from SAED program in NYSC Camp for self-reliance in Damaturu Educational Zone, Yobe State?
2. What are the challenges for effective utilization of entrepreneurial skills of unemployed graduates for self-reliance in Damaturu Educational Zone?

Empirical Studies

This section of the literature deals with a review of related researches carried out by different authorities that have noticeable similarities with this study. Emenike, (2021) conducted a study Impact of Entrepreneurial



Finance on Business Start-ups in Rivers State, Nigeria. The use of entrepreneurial finance has been on the increase to add value and apply resources allocation to new ventures. The study is as survey design. The study investigated the entrepreneurial finance on business start-ups in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study hinged on “Agency Theory.” Data and information were generated through disseminated questionnaires and using face-to-face hand delivery, e-mails and social media (WhatsApp). Answers to research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequencies, tables, mean, while Chi-Square was adopted in analyzing the hypotheses. Result showed that there no significant relationship between new start-ups and level of initial funding capital of venture start-ups in Rivers State. More funding source of start-ups is through credit card borrowing. Lifestyles of managers of new start-ups are responsible for the non-expansion of the sector. The study recommended that there is the need for government through financial institutions to improve the quality of start-ups for small and medium scale investment projects, especially the riskier start-ups. And financial institutions should assist by stepping into due diligence by investors to ensure that funded start-ups are properly managed and reduce investors’ reckless lifestyles.

Ezeahurukwe and Ameh (2016) carried out a study on Entrepreneurial Opportunities in the Office Technology and Management Programme: A panacea for Youth Unemployment. The study focus on the entrepreneurial opportunities in OTM in which graduates of OTM who leave school would not rely and depend on collar job rather depending on the skills acquired to boost their personal economic well-being. The study also used polytechnics graduates i.e. ND and HND. The findings of the study therefore,

infer that successful OTM Graduates are equipped and thus encouraged to develop a desire for self-employment.

In another study conducted by Ameh and Ezeahurukwe (2016) on the “Entrepreneurs’ Perception of Competencies Required by Polytechnic Graduates for Business and Economic Survival in A Dwindling Nigerian Economy”. In the study, a descriptive survey design was used. The instrument was validated by three experts from OTM Department, Federal Polytechnic Idah. Research questions were also formulated and 180 questionnaires are administered to entrepreneurs in Idah, Kogi State using descriptive statistics to calculate the mean and Standard Deviation.

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 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.

Table 1: Skills acquired by unemployed graduates from SAED program in NYSC Camp for self-reliance in Damaturu Educational Zone, Yobe State?

S/N	Statement	No	X	SD	Decision
1	Electric installation skills	230	4.47	1.56	Agree
2	Cosmetology skill	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



Table 1 above shows that item 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 is the bench

mark. Therefore, the respondents agreed all the items as the skills acquired during SAED program by the unemployed graduate in NYSC camp.

Table 2: Challenges to effective utilization of entrepreneurial skills acquire by unemployed graduates for self-reliance in Damaturu 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	Disagree
11	To 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

Table two above reveals that item 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 – 2.77 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 Damaturu Educational Zone, Yobe State.

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 (2021): NYSC SAED: Agro-allied. This

section of the SAED program partners with organizations involved in large-scale production, processing, and pack aging of food using modern equipment and methods. They are usually involved in education and training interested corp 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 corp members learn the skills of driving. A lot of corp 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. With the SAED program in the orientation camp, it is common to see beauticians who would teach corp 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 corp members can learn useful skills in improving and perfecting the hairstyle of clients. With the new knowledge of the corp 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 item 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 Damaturu 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 Katsina State.

Conclusion

In conclusion, therefore, the challenges bedeviled the effective utilization of entrepreneurial skill of unemployed graduates for self-reliance in Damaturu 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.

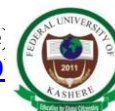
Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the researcher offers the following recommendations

1. Unemployed graduates must continue to practice acquired skills of the SAED NYSC program for self-reliance.
2. Unemployed graduates need guidance and motivation and should remove the phobia of competitions of the bigger companies to face all the challenges hindering to effective utilization of SAED Skills such as ways of obtaining soft loan at financial agencies, obtaining a start-up capital and stop depending much on government employment in other to be self-reliant.

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