

**SELF EMPLOYMENT MOTIVATION OF NIGERIAN TECHNICAL COLLEGE  
GRADUATES FOR EMPLOYMENT**

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**Abstract**

*Self employment is a solution for eradicating poverty and unemployment. In Nigeria today, youth employment challenges is causing the government a great deal of concern. The paper has discussed the meaning of self employment and technical college graduates. Entrepreneurial skills required by technical colleges graduates for successful self employment were examined. Major problems affecting self employment in Nigeria and the consequence of unemployment of youths were dealt with. The paper explained reasons for the motivation of technical college graduates for self employment and possible requirements for equipping technical graduates with relevant skills for self employment were identified. The paper suggested that, technical college graduates should be motivated by providing necessary tools, machines, relevant textbooks, equipment and enough capital to establish their workshop or businesses and the curriculum of technical colleges should be reviewed to reflect relevant modern skills or competencies that can help the graduates in establishing workshops or businesses.*

**Key Words: Self Employment, Motivation, Technical Colleges**

**Introduction**

Unemployment of youths in Nigeria has become pronounced in the last two decades due to primarily upsurge in the output from institution and inelastic labour absorptive capacity of the Nigerian labour market for the services of graduates. According to Fajana (2000), unemployment refers to a situation where people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find a suitable paid employment. With an estimated 60 million unemployed persons representing nearly one-third of the country's population, human capacity development is being seriously endangered. The National Bureau of Statistics (2010) said that over 50% of youths in Nigeria are jobless, while the World Bank puts the figure at 56%. Considering the country's estimated population of about 167million and 60 million jobless, these are grim figures portending danger to economic growth and development of a nation with the largest concentration of black people on earth.

Federal Government of Nigeria has put in place initiatives such as National directorate of employment and skills on wheel to curb the rate of unemployment among the youths but all proved abortive or little has been achieved so far. Huge amount of money also has been spent on establishment of skills acquisition centres in all the States and to equip the existing ones for the training and retraining of youths in various trades but no tangible yield has been recorded so far. Unemployment still remains the major problem facing Nigerian youth's most especially technical college graduates from various institutions across the country.

In Nigeria today, youth employment challenges is causing the government a great deal of concern. According to Idoko (2010), it is estimated that about 4.5 million youths, mostly educated, are entering the labour market annually. He pointed out that in order to prevent the unusually high level of youth unemployment and underdevelopment rates from getting higher, the government should take urgent ameliorative action. Idoko maintains further that since up to 40 percent of the employment created in Nigeria is through self- or "own account" employment, it is vital that trainees who graduates from technical and vocational institutions are prepared to create their own employment. Therefore, the trainers in technical and vocational education trades must not only provide the trainees with the essential technical and vocational skills needed for employment but also with the entrepreneurial skill and ability to establish their own businesses. Also, Obi (2010) asserted that, mass unemployment which has been evident in the last two decades has reached alarming proportions and involved all categories of labour-skilled and unskilled persons, university graduates and specialist individuals .Obi explain further that, there is therefore the need to

massively equip the youth with useful trade and entrepreneurship skills necessary to elevate them from their present condition of poverty and joblessness to a vibrant and entrepreneurial youth ready to contribute to the development of the nation. According to Adebisi (2011), the right way to fight youth unemployment is by empowering the young people through acquisition of relevant skills such as entrepreneurial skills, which will definitely lead to employment generation and wealth creation. The total dependence on white-collar jobs has done a lot of damage to the present generation of youths as well as widened the poverty net. Therefore, by the virtue of their training, these graduates are expected to be skilled in order to establish their businesses and employ others.

### **Technical Colleges and Self Employment**

Technical colleges are post primary institutions of learning that are established by government, individuals and cooperate organizations to equip individuals with skills in various occupations. Okoro (2006) stated that, technical colleges are regarded as the principal vocational institutions in Nigeria that give full vocational training intended to prepare students for entry into various occupations as artisans and craftsmen. According to Abdulkadir, (2011), technical colleges are established for the training of students to acquire practical skills, knowledge and attitude. However, the major goals of technical college education are to produce efficient and relevant craftsmen and women that will promote an industrial development in the area of maintenance, goods production and general services. Boyi (2008) also opined that, the goals of technical college education is to develop saleable skill in the youths in order to make them useful to themselves; society and also become labour assets in the industries. They give full vocational training intended to prepare individuals for entry into various occupations. Therefore, technical colleges are post-primary institution of learning where the requirements for self employment can be obtained and these requirements may include knowledge, techniques, technical and entrepreneurial skills.

Self-employment is the act of generating one's income directly from customers through working, clients or other organizations as opposed to being an employee of a business (or person). Abdulkarim (2012) describe self-employment as the act of working for oneself. Citizens Information, (2014) states that, when one is self-employed, it means one is carrying on ones own business rather than working for an employer. Okorie (2000) stated that, the absence of education and skill looms large as causes of unemployment. The unemployment rate is always higher among labourers than any other occupational group. Self employment rates are extremely low among professional and technical workers and among managers, officials and proprietors although as noted earlier and among managers, officials and proprietors although as noted earlier, even these groups are not entirely free of self employment. Self employment rates also have a close though inverse relationship to the level of education probably due in large measure, to the importance of educational preparation in the determination of workers occupations with each step up the educational ladder, the rate of self employment drops significantly. Therefore, a self-employed person can operate as a sole trader or as a partner in a partnership (including a Limited Liability Partnership or LLP) but not through an incorporated limited (or unlimited) liability company. It is also possible for someone to form a business that is run only part-time or concurrently while holding down a full-time job. This form of employment, while popular, does come with several legal responsibilities. When working from home, clearance may sometimes be required from the local authority to use part of the home as business premises.

Furthermore, self-employed people generally find their own work rather than being provided with work by an employer, earning income from a trade or business that they operate. In some countries governments are placing more emphasis on clarifying whether an individual is self-employed or engaged in disguised employment, often described as the pretense of a contractual

intra-business relationship to hide what is otherwise a simple employer-employee relationship. Today in Nigeria, the high incidence of school dropout among technical college students clearly highlights the importance of career development, which is achievable through vocational and technical education. These students who could not fit into the academic oriented curriculum would need practical skill to enable them function profitably in the society. Secondly, the graduates from these existing technical colleges system invariably enter the job market seeking employment that does hardly exist in this country today. To draw the majority of these job seekers out of the unemployment market, efficient vocational and technical training in technical college become the most potent elixir. This again required the training of the teachers that would impact these skills to students in the post primary and tertiary education levels.

### **Technical Skills**

Skill is defined as the ability to do something expertly. According to Nwokike (2011), skill is the ability to do something well and expertly. Nwokolo (2010) stated that, skills are those knowledge and competencies which an individual can supply and gainfully utilized for the purposes of achieving optimum productivity in industries. Therefore, skills are the ability which technical college graduates can demonstrate well and expertly for them to succeed in an enterprise. Therefore, skills needed to be taught in technical colleges in order to enable technical college graduates to succeed as self-employed graduates. Technical skills are the skills required to accomplishment of a specific task. Abinu (2012) described technical skills as the knowledge and skills specific to a particular occupation or group of occupations. According to Robinson (2000), technical skills are job-specific related skills required to perform a particular job. Those with technical skills are often referred to as technicians in their chosen field. It is the major skill required to perform technical tasks. Without technical skills, the objective of an enterprise may be difficult to accomplish by an entrepreneur.

According to Okorie and Ezeji (1998) technical skills calls for understanding and proficiency in a specific activity, particularly one involving methods, processes, procedures or techniques. Technical teachers find that, when instruction in procedure does not correspond with performance, students invariable learn the method used by the instructor, rather than follow the instructions. Imitation is, therefore, a necessary factor in the learning of a skill. After acquiring a technique of an action by reproducing the movement of one already accomplished in the art, the student must repeat the action many times before he attains any useful degree of readiness. Failure to provide for repetition will result in producing amateur rather than skilled performance. Okorie and Ezeji (1998) added that, the imitation if a master and frequent practice fall short of complete preparation fore skilled vocational practice. Hence, to complete the training of a student in a skill that is saleable in occupational life, part of the practice must be had under actual production conditions. It is impossible completely to reproduce in a school the condition of occupational life that affects the exercise of the vocational skills. Therefore it is worthy to note that, technical college student's perception of the technical college teachers influences a training programme in technical colleges. Students learn better when they admire their teachers and teachers that can motivate them.

Similarly, Mbaragbog (2003) was of the view that, acquisition of technical skills is the ability of a person to carry out trade or craftwork involving knowledge, judgment, accuracy and manual deftness usually acquired as the result of a long training. Mbaragbog stressed further that, an unskilled man is not expected to do anything which cannot be learnt in a relatively short time. Semi-skilled jobs are regarded as intermediate, involving characteristics of skilled work but to an extent which demands a training extending over weeks and months rather than years.

According to Okorie (2000) skills acquisition in technical colleges is important for

harnessing a nation's natural resources and for promoting economic stability. The wealth of a society determines to a large extent the development of that society. Nigeria is endowed with mineral and agricultural resources. If these are to be properly harnessed and economically utilized, there is need for emphasis to be placed on the acquisition of skills by her workforce. Okorie explain further that, all skills are dependent on some form of knowledge. Skill is a manifestation of acquired knowledge. It is a knowledge that is translated into practical activity. It may also be described as knowledge that is put into practical use once it is translated into activity. Theory and practices must be fully integrated into a teaching-learning process for the purpose of effectiveness and worthwhile result. All teaching should help the learner acquire a blend of theory and practice skills in order to achieve his objectives.

### **Entrepreneurial, Technical, Financial, Marketing and Communication Skills required by Technical College Graduates for successful Self Employment**

The graduates of technical colleges in Nigeria are called craftsmen. They are expected to possess necessary skills in their areas of specialization in order to embark on self employment after graduation. Self employment is a condition where an individual work for his or her self. The possession of skills makes establishment of small and medium scale enterprise easier. Enterprise is an organized business activities aimed specifically at growth and profit. Anyakoha (2009), define an enterprise as a business project undertaken by an individual or a group of individuals which requires readiness and dedication on the part of the individual(s) engaged in the venture. According to Mundra, (2012), entrepreneurship is the engine fuelling innovation, employment generation and economic growth. Entrepreneurial skill is the ability to choose appropriate business to raise their economic status and enhance success in business. Jeroen (2003) described entrepreneurial skills as the abilities needed for autonomy and independence, taking initiative, looking for possibilities to carry out business, self-confidence and endurance in any business opportunity. Uko (2009), asserted that, entrepreneurial skills are the ability to manipulate resources, efficiently within a particular enterprise with the purpose of achieving the goal of production of that enterprise. Entrepreneurial skills enable individuals to exploit an idea and create an enterprise not only for personal gain but also for social and development gains. Oko (2012) stated that, entrepreneurial skills include technical, managerial, financial, marketing and communication skills. Therefore, entrepreneurial skills are the basic skills necessary or needed by technical college graduates to start, develop, finance and succeed in a business venture, to make them self-employed.

Managerial skills are needed for effective management of an enterprise. Managerial skills are the tactics for effective management of human and materials inputs in order to account for maximum output in an organization. According to Abiodun and Ajayi (2008), managerial skills are the type of skills required by individual entrepreneur to formulate and execute policies of an enterprise which constitute management. Nwachuchkwu (2006) described management as the coordination of all resources of an organization through the process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling in order to attaining organization objectives. Managerial skills enable entrepreneurs to run successful enterprises. Therefore, managerial skills are skills needed by technical college graduates that can enable them to run successful enterprises to be self employed.

Financial management skills enhance individual's ability to deal with tasks such as, unit budget preparation and control, cost containment, cost benefit analysis and productivity measures (Chase, 1994). These skills are important for unit heads. Financial management skills as explained by Richard, Gary and Larry (2001), enable one to understand the financial matter of an organization. It involves where to find capital, how to secure it, how to plan cash flow, how to keep effective financial and how to foresee future financial needs. Therefore, financial management skills

are basic skills necessary or needed by technical college graduates to enable them to understand financial matters of an organization or an enterprise.

Marketing skills are the skills required to market goods and services produced by an enterprise. Nwafor (2007) explained that, marketing skills are the abilities that keep the entrepreneur informed, knowledgeable and confident as to determine the most efficient method of physical distribution of goods and services in order to satisfy customers. Richard, Gary and Larry (1991) said that, marketing involves identifying relevant markets accurately; communicate effectively with potential customers, users, or donors; and maintaining a sensitivity to the marketing place. Osuala (1993) identified some marketing skills to include: Being familiar with various aspects of sales and sale techniques, determining the cost of advertisement, determining the storage facilities and determining the extent of the market. Audrestsch (2002) sees an entrepreneur as an individual responsible for the process creating new values or an innovation and/or new organization. They equally recognized entrepreneurship skills to include some abilities as the use of banking facilities for fast growth and development of a business preparation and interpretation of pay roll of employees within an organization and computation of trade and cash discount. Therefore, marketing skills are the abilities that can keep the technical college graduates informed and develop effective distribution network to satisfy customers and make them self employed.

Communication skills are the knowledge and ability required by individuals to transfer information from one place to another. These skills involved written, oral or visual and non verbal. Communication skills enable one to create sound awareness about the products of an enterprise. Communication skills are the ability to express oneself and understand others so that ideas can be shared. These skills enable individuals to convey information so that it is received and understood. Communication skills in the opinion of Richard, Gary and Larry (1991) are the skills for entrepreneurs to convince others that their ideas are worthy of support. The authors stated further that, entrepreneurs need to explain to others their jobs and what the goals of the ventures are in order to motivate these people to work effectively. Good communication skills, in terms of oral and written are essential for successful enterprise. According to Rao (2007), communication skills are the abilities to transfer one's thought, ideas and information from the sender to the receiver with the latter begin understood the same effectively and efficiently. It will enable students to communicate business transactions fluently with their customers. Therefore, communication skills are the basic skills needed by technical college graduate to communicate business transactions fluently with their customers.

### **Problems affecting Self Employment in Nigeria**

Technical and vocational education has been described as education for work. That is, the expectation of the graduates of technical and vocational education is to set up their enterprise or small scale industries and employ others or absorb by government and industries. But where individual technical vocational graduates acquired relevant skills to stand alone, observation reveals that, there are stills influencing factors. The factors are enumerated below:

**The Capital to take up the Job:** Resources or physical money is needed by products of technical and vocational education to buy tools, relevant equipment, materials and to secure accommodation for the business to take place. Capital or money is needed to advertise the business, products or services of the industries to the society. Most of the skilled and knowledgeable technical and vocational educators do not have enough capital to set up their business.

**Power and Electricity:** Power and electricity is the heart beat and economic background of any nation. In Nigeria, the issue of electricity failure is the major problem. The state of power and electricity is not friendly with technical and vocational education. Most of the activities in Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) depend on electricity, power tools, machines and equipment cannot be used without power supply. Technical and vocational educators cannot be efficient in providing employment for themselves and others. These conditions make the objectives of Technical and Vocational Education in the country not realizable.

**Lack of Skills:** Other factors affecting self employment is that most of the graduates are not competent to create employment for themselves and others. Investigation reveals that about 85% of the products of tertiary Institutions in Nigeria are not employable simply because of their low quality. They possess little or no technical skills in their areas of interest or specialization. Establishment of any enterprise requires someone to have enough skills, knowledge and attitudes for successful running of the business.

**Societal attitudes:** have also been identified as one of the problems facing technical and vocational education in Nigeria. Nigeria societies have not fully recognized Technical Vocational Education as other type of education. The graduates of technical and vocational education are still seen as never-do-well and second class graduates. They are still seen as individuals whom acquired their vocational skills outside school setting. Some of the graduates who possessed technical skills, knowledge and who would have set up business failed just because of societal attitudes towards the field.

### **Consequences of Unemployment of Youths in Nigeria**

Unemployment is a social problem and is rampant because people do not possess the necessary skills and competencies which the modern economy demands. Thus Nigerians are faced with problems of unemployment. The results of long time youths unemployment in any developing nation include war, anti government, robbery, revolution, internet fraud (such as yahoo yahoo), famine, drug carrier, political thugery, kidnapping, high rate of immigration, militancy and religious sect such as Boko haram. It was noted that the leaders are no longer trusted and the mill of the anti socials enlarges by the day. Zakaria (2006) and Ajufo (2013) confirmed that, the unavailability to job opportunities among youths especially graduates have been identified as one of the major factors responsible for youth restiveness and other social vices including prostitution, arm robbery, destitution and political thuggery. The consequences of unemployment among youths, according to Alanana (2003), the negative consequences include poverty, psychological problems of frustration, depression, hostility, abduction, murder, armed robbery and all manner of criminal behaviour causing general insecurity of life and property. Against this background, there is urgent need for massive employment in order to check youth restiveness. Training of youths using efficient framework or programme could be of help in reducing unemployment.

### **Motivation of Technical College Graduates for Self Employment**

Motivation is an action that makes someone to do something. Motivation, according to Gottfried, Fleming and Gottfried (2001) is the underlie behaviour that is characterized by willingness and volition. According to Hidi and Harackiewicz (2000) define motivation as the attribute that, moves one to do or not to do something. Therefore, motivation is any strategy that will make technical college graduates to be self employed.

According to Ugweke, Onu, Agboege and Asogwa (2013), strategy is a carefully devised

plan of action to achieve a goal. It is also a plan of action that is carried out to achieve a desired goal. Strategies in the context of the study are planned actions that will motivate technical college graduates to enter into ventures that will sustain them to be self employed. Therefore, motivation is any strategy that will make technical college graduates to engage in productive ventures that will make them to be self employed.

Technical college graduates can be motivated to set up their own enterprises in the following ways:

1. Training the graduates while in school and colleges with relevant appropriate curriculum that can serve as a source of motivation.
2. Let the technical college graduates know the place of technical and vocational education in the career progression
3. Give the graduates solid orientation about self employment and technical and vocational education before leaving school to the world of work
4. Donate tools, equipment and machines relevant to their chosen trade or occupations
5. Give the graduates enough capital to set up the workshop or business

Requirements for Equipping Technical College Graduates with relevant Skills for Self Employment:

1. Modern tools, equipment and machines are needed for effective training of students in technical colleges
2. Well equipped workshops, laboratories, relevant technical college textbooks and conducive classroom are required in technical colleges
3. Employment of skilled and qualified teachers to teach trades or occupation to students is required
4. Training and retraining of teacher is also paramount to achieve the purpose of equipping technical college graduates with relevant skills for self employment.
5. Relevant skills, competences or course contents in line with global standard should be integrated to the existing programmes of technical colleges.

## Conclusions

Since the chalk and talk school system was clearly not effective in preparing technical college graduates for the jobs required by modern industry in Nigeria, government should look toward vocational and technical education entrepreneurial skills, techniques and knowledge as means of providing for the work force needed in both government and non-governmental organizations. If this is being done, it will improve the standard of living of the Nigerian citizens. The paper concludes that, vocational and technical education skills and techniques in technical colleges in Nigeria is the pivot of any national development. It is when the individual in the micro setting are self reliant that the macro economy becomes buoyant and stable. Therefore, vocational and technical education is the live wire of technology. It is no exaggeration to assert that, vocational and technical education constitutes the arteries that supply life-sustaining blood through the system of country economy and standard of living. It will be an impossible task to plan and develop any economy in which vocational and technical education is not developed.



### Suggestions

For graduates of technical colleges to successfully embark on self employment in Nigeria, the following suggestions are made:

1. Technical college graduates should be motivated by providing necessary tools, machines, equipment in line with global standard and enough capital to establish workshops or start their own business.
2. Curriculum of technical colleges should be reviewed to reflect relevant modern skills or competencies that can help the graduates in establishing workshops or setting up their business.

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