

**ENHANCING ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES OF BUILDING
CONSTRUCTION GRADUATES OF FEDERAL COLLEGE OF
EDUCATION TECHNICAL (OMOKU) FOR SELF
EMPLOYMENT IN RIVERS STATE**

BY

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Abstract

The study was designed to determine ways of enhancing entrepreneurial competencies of building construction graduate of Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku, River State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated for the study. Survey research design was used for the study. A 15 item questionnaire was used to elicit responses from 6 respondents, who were 30 lecturers and 30 renounce entrepreneur in the locality. The reliability of the instruments was determined using Cronbach alpha which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.69. Mean with standard deviation were used to answer the research question while t-test statistics was used to test the null hypothesis. The study revealed that training/retraining of graduates will help enhance their entrepreneurial competencies in the building construction occupation. Also the graduates require fund for entrepreneurial activities like opening of marketing/block moulding industry or selling building materials amongst other. It was recommended therefore, that training/retraining programs should be organised by the government for graduates of building construction of colleges of education (Technical). Also, those building construction graduates of colleges of education (Technical) should be motivated by the government for effective performance in their occupation.

Introduction

Building construction is the process of constructing a building infrastructure. Construction start with planning, design and finance and continues until the project is built and ready to use. Construction requires collaboration across multiple disciplines which include; an architect, building engineer, design engineer construction, engineer or project manager

and others. According to Nunnally (2011), building construction is the process of adding structure to real property. Stephen and Christopher (2010) in their findings discovered that there are three sectors of construction namely; building, infrastructure and industrial. The authors further noted that building construction is usually further divided into residential and non-residential commercial/institution. Infrastructure is often called

heavy/highway, heavy civil or heavy engineering. It involves large public works, dams, bridges and utility distribution. Industrial includes refineries, processing chemical, power generation mills and manufacturing plants. Nunnally (2011) again noted that the steps involved in building development process include; Recognizing the need for the project, determining the technical and financial feasibility of the project, preparing detailed plans; specifications and cost estimates for the building and obtaining approval from regulatory agencies. Thus, ascertaining compliance with zoning regulations, building codes and environmental and other regulations.

Building construction covers occupations like, block laying, Brick laying and concrete work, simple building plan/design, painting and decorating, plumbing and pipe-fitting etc, Federal Republic of Nigeria FRN, (2013). Skills in these occupations are often acquired from technical colleges and colleges of Education (Technical).

Federal Republic of Nigeria FRN (2013), states that college of education (Technical) is used as a comprehensive term to refer to those aspects of the educational process, involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related science and the application of practical skill, attitude, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. Furthermore, technical education is an integral part of general education and a means of preparing individuals for occupations in “building construction” and for effective participation in the world of work. FRN, (2013) further stated that college of education (technical) aims at making education at all levels more functional and

responsive to socio-economic and technological development of the country. The author further emphasised that one of the major thrust of the national policy on education is to provide a more comprehensive and explanatory national education system that will give individual student opportunities to acquire relevant skills, both mental physical competencies and ability for self-reliant, gainful employment, and further education in any occupation. Ogwo and Oranu (2006) define technical education as the academic and vocational preparation of students for job involving applied science and modern technology. The authors further noted that college of education (technical) emphasises the understanding and practical application of basic principles of science and mathematics. Also that, the objective of college of education (technical) is the preparation of graduates for occupation that are closely above the skill craft and below scientific or engineering professional.

The graduates having acquired these skills in the colleges of education (Technical), need motivation and enhancing the skills in order to be successful in the occupation. This can be done through workshops, seminars, conferences and re-training programmes, organised by renounce entrepreneurs in the locality and teachers in technical education department higher education like the university/ colleges of education (Technical). These training will also enhance the graduates performance in terms of self employment and creation of job if properly harness with entrepreneurship education.

Osuala (2004) in Onoh (2011) stated that entrepreneurship education is a specialized education given to recipients of vocational and technology education

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competencies as essential factors for organisational success. These competencies requires enhancement overtime as to keep the college of education (technical) graduates/entrepreneurs abreast with the dynamics of the society for the sustainability of their employment be it in the formal or informal sector of the economy. The entrepreneurial competency enhancement could be done strategically; hence it involves training/retraining strategies, motivational strategies and the like.

Training/retraining strategies refers to those strategies employed to impart entrepreneurial competencies to the students during their course of study in the college of education (technical), and the graduates/entrepreneurs after graduation. Training and retraining strategies involves teaching methods (such as lecture method, demonstration method, etc), seminars for graduates, visitation to construction sites and reporting by the students as an in-course in the college of education. Others include sensitising the graduates either by radio or television instruction and or organizing workshops for the graduates to keep them updated with the recent societal demands. This can easily be attained by employing motivational strategies.

Motivation strategies in this study, involves providing guidance and training to develop leadership qualities amongst college of education (technical) students/graduates. Motivational strategies deals with what actions could be employed to get the students/graduates of college of education (technical) passionately involved in a personal development planning processes as well as the formal training. This could come in the form of provision of fund by the government, provision of conducive training environment, provision of

building equipment at subsidized rate, provision of facilities and opportunities for learning etc. The training/retraining and motivational strategies as determined by this study have the propensity of empowering college of education (technical) graduates for self employment.

Self-employment also referred to as self-reliance is the ability of an individual to plan, set up, and manage ones' own enterprise, giving special attention to the opportunities and the attendant risks, for profit making. An individual is said to be self-reliant when her/she can depend less on other people and his family in the management of her human and material resources. The citizens will be self-reliant when they have possible cause to access and utilize the essentials of life which includes good food, clothing, shelters, medication, transportations, and functional education (Ofoye, 2010). A self-reliant individual must be enterprising. This implies that he/she is enterprising when there is attributes of verbal skills for selling, dominating and leading. The ongoing is a mirage amongst graduates of Federal College of Education (technical), Omoku, Rivers State.

The Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State of Nigeria is one of the Federal Colleges of Education (Technical) established by Act No. 4 of 1986 of the Federal Government of Nigeria. Act No.6 of 1993 amended the Act. The highlight of the amendment is the appointment of Principal Officers by t e n u r e (<http://fcetomoku.edu.ng/contents.php?id=1>). The author further noted that, in addition to the regular academic programmes, there is a part-time skill acquisition scheme for youths of the host communities to acquire saleable skills for

through which they acquire idea, management abilities and capabilities for self-employment, self-reliance and economic growth. Also Akintola (2001) in Onoh (2011) sees entrepreneurship education as that which prepares individuals to undertake the formation and or operation of small business enterprises for the purpose of performing all business functions relating to a product or services with emphasis given to the social responsibilities, legal requirements and risk for the sake of profit making in self-employment.

Shane (2003) described entrepreneurship as the act of being an entrepreneur. According to Shane, the world entrepreneur can be taken to mean an individual who undertakes innovations, finance and business acumen in an effort to transform innovations into economic goods. Hence, the result of ones' effort in entrepreneurship may be the creation of a new organisation or revitalising an existing organisation in response to a perceived opportunity. According to the author, Bill Gates could not have for example made his fortune if Steve Jobs did not see the opportunity to build and sell personal computers; neither could Steve job have built a personal computer if Gordon Moore had not invented the microprocessor. Thus, acts of entrepreneurship education creates specific environment within which innovations built on themselves leading to continually increasing productivity (Holcombe, 1998). Onoh (2011) noted that entrepreneurship activities varies according to the goal or opportunity one is pursuing. Although, it substantially differs one from another, but depends largely on the types of enterprises and creativity involved. He further stated that a good number of entrepreneurship efforts range in scale from sole or one person business

which may even be undertaken on part time basis only to big undertakings creating many job opportunities that help to reduce unemployment in the society.

The Nigeria economy which used to thrive on agriculture exports such as cocoa, groundnut, hides and skin, is now solely dependent on the price of oil in the international market. It is a common knowledge that any fall in the price of oil will result to a fall in the cosmetic Nigerian economy, which has also contributed in recent time, to the rate of unemployment as witnessed in the country today. Also attributed to the trend of unemployment witnessed in the country, is the deficiency of requisite skills needed for self and paid employment amongst graduates of colleges of education (technical). This ill situation can be overcome by equipping/enhancing students/graduates with entrepreneurial skills, attitude and competencies in other to be job creators and not just job hunter.

Entrepreneurial competency is a stage of novelty of an individual in a particular vocation. Achilike and Okwuanaso (2004) in Okoro (2007) define entrepreneurial competencies as the abilities of powers and authority of skills, knowledge, attitudes that are needed to accomplish tasks. The authors further stated that entrepreneurial competencies comprises of knowledge or the "know-how" required for an occupation; skills in the application of knowledge successfully on one's sphere of work in order to accomplish occupational role. Onoh (2011) identifies three categories of entrepreneurial competencies, technical, system and interpersonal competency. Also, Osu (2010) added that entrepreneurial competencies include; technical, human relations, financial/marketing and managerial

Table 1: The mean score with standard deviation result of lecturers in Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku, Rivers State and entrepreneurs in the locality on the Training/retraining strategies which can be used by facilitators in enhancing entrepreneurial competencies of building construction graduates

S/N	Statement	FCT(T) Lecturers(30)			Entrepreneurs(30)			Aggregate(60)	
		X ₁	SD ₁	DEC	X ₂	SD ₂	DEC	X ₂	SD _{DEC}
1	Use of Lecture Method	3.46	0.76	Agree	3.63	0.60	Agree	3.55	0.68
2	Use of Demonstration Method	3.57	0.76	Agree	3.60	0.71	Agree	3.59	0.74
3	Organise Workshop for the Graduates	3.51	0.91	Agree	3.66	0.69	Agree	3.59	0.80
4	Organise Seminar for the Graduates	3.57	0.72	Agree	3.5	0.76	Agree	3.54	0.74
5	Use Telephones to help give them Information	3.65	0.72	Agree	3.53	0.76	Agree	3.59	0.74
6	Always visit them in their workplace (site)	3.37	0.91	Agree	3.46	0.76	Agree	3.42	0.84
7	Organise for Radio and Television Instruction	3.60	0.96	Agree	3.46	0.88	Agree	3.53	0.92
8	Write out procedure on skills required for building construction in a pamphlet and share to the graduates	3.37	0.91	Agree	3.46	0.76	Agree	3.42	0.84
9	Take graduates of building construction to construction site.	3.47	0.81	Agree	3.53	0.85	Agree	3.50	0.83
10	Visit skill acquisition centre with building construction graduate for maize formation on the skill on the occupation.	3.56	0.76	Agree	3.63	0.70	Agree	3.60	0.73
	Grand mean	3.51	0.80	Agree	3.54	0.74	Agree	3.53	0.72

Results in **Table 1** revealed that all the 10 items had their mean ratings ranging from 3.42 to 3.60 indicating that the respondents agree with all the items as training/retraining strategies which can be used by facilitators in enhancing entrepreneurial competencies of building construction graduates. The grand mean of 3.53 attested to that. Also the standard deviation ranged from 0.68 to 0.92 indicating homogeneity of response.

Research Question Two

What are the motivational strategies which can be used by facilitators in enhancing entrepreneurial competencies of building construction graduates of Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku Rivers State?

Table 2: The mean score with standard deviation results of lecturers in Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku, Rivers State and entrepreneurs in the locality on the motivational strategies which can be used by facilitators in enhancing entrepreneurial competencies of building construction graduates

The data presented in **Table 3** show a computed t-value of 0.11 which is less than t-critical value of 1.960 at 58 degree of freedom; hence the null hypothesis is not rejected. Lecturers and entrepreneurs have a consensus opinion on all the items as training/retraining strategies which can be used by facilitators in enhancing entrepreneurial competencies of building construction graduate of Federal College of education (Technical) Omoku River State.

Ho₂ There is no significant differences in the mean ratings of the responses of lectures and entrepreneurs on motivation strategies which can be used by facilitators in enhancing entrepreneurial competencies of building construction graduates of Federal Colleges of Education (Technical) Omoku Rivers State.

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t-cal	T-crit	Decision
Lecturer	30	3.53	0.7	58	0.23	1.960	NS
Entrepreneur	30	3.57	0.66				

The data presented in **Table 4** show a computed t-value of 0.23 which is less than t-critical value of 1.960 at 58 degree of freedom; hence the null hypothesis is not rejected. Lecturers and entrepreneurs have a consensus opinion on all the items as motivating strategies which can be used by facilitators in enhancing entrepreneurial competencies of building construction graduate of Federal College of education (Technical) Omoku River State.

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Discussion of Findings

The finding from research question 1 revealed that training/retraining is essential. It was found that demonstration and guided practice will enhance the competencies of the graduates of building construction on college of education (Technical). This finding is in line with Ogwo and Oranu (2006) who noted that demonstration is the basic method for introducing skill to learners just as there is no more effective way to learn skill than to practice, so also there is no better way to teach skill than to demonstrate it. Osinem (2008) also agrees that demonstration is one of teacher greatest asset in arriving at fundamental skills and practice in very short time. The author found that it is available to job trainers in industries, teachers in various trade and instructors were people want to learn skills or better of doing something.

The study also found that the use of radio and television training strategies can enhance competency of building construction graduate. This founding is an agreement with Akubילו (2015) who

found that information on new techniques and skills can be passed to many building construction graduate who are far and wide at the same time through radio announcement or demonstration of skills in the television. The study found that exposing building construction graduate to seminars can enhance their competencies in their occupation. The study is in line with Aneke (2014) who found that attending seminar, workshop and conferences exposes the learner to new environment with new technologies and idea that will enhance competency.

From research question 2, it was found that government interaction in provision of fund would help to enhance the competency of building construction graduates. The finding is in consonance with the finding of Chukwu (2005) who revealed that fund is important in running any business because it is required to purchase materials.

Conclusion

Enhancing Entrepreneur competencies of building construction graduates of college of education

(Technical) through entrepreneurship education for sustainable human development is paramount. When these graduates are not gainfully engaged there is every likelihood that they will be engaged in anti-human and retrogressive activities. For technical education to surface in rendering effective skill preparation for enhancing entrepreneurial competencies in a given occupation, training and re-retaining of graduate is handsomely remunerated to beef-up their interest. The various organs in charge of helping unemployed graduates develop strategies of motivating these graduate for them to be useful in the society and the nation at large.

Recommendation

Base on the findings, the following recommendation were made:

Training/retraining programs should be organised by the government for graduates of building construction of colleges of education (Technical).

Building construction graduates of colleges of education (Technical) should be motivated by the government through provision of funds for them to start-up entrepreneurial activities in their occupation.

Building construction graduates should to be encouraged to visit various building construction site, that will help boost their competencies in the occupation.

Qualified facilitators should be in charge of training/retraining programs during workshop/seminars.

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