

**RELEVANCE OF NON-FARM SKILL ACQUISITION TO NATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

OLOWOPOROKU Ayodeji John¹, BABARINDE Samuel Adelani², JOSHUA Abolade Opeyemi³, AJAYI Adeola⁴, BABARINDE Isaac Adeyemi⁵, SHIYANBADE Bolanle Waliu⁶ and AJAYI Olaniyi Adewale⁷

1. Department of Demography and Social Statistics,
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.

Corresponding Author Email: ayodejiolowoporoku2016@gmail.com

2. Department of Crop and Environmental Protection,
Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho, Oyo State, Nigeria

3. Department of Animal Science,
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

4. Institute for Entrepreneurship and Development Studies,
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.

5. Graduate University for Advanced Studies,
Department of Genetics, Miura, Japan.

6. Department of Public Administration,
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria

7. Department of Educational of Education Foundation and Management
Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

Corresponding Author's Email Address: ajayifunso4christ@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Non-farm skill acquisition is a means of empowerment and a form of training by individual or group of individuals that can lead to acquisition of knowledge for self sustenance. It manifests idea and knowledge through training which is geared towards instilling to individuals the spirit of entrepreneurial skills needed for meaningful development. It also provides the accumulation of different skills that can enhances task performance through the integration of both theoretical and practical forms of knowledge. Despite the huge financial resources committed to providing various form of technical and vocational skills for youth in the country, the impact have not been felt all over the country. In view of this therefore, this paper examined the relevance of non-farm

skill acquisition to national development in Nigeria. This was necessitated by need to stress the relevance of non-farm skill acquisition to national development in Nigeria. Second source of data was employed for the paper findings from literature review showed that non-farm skill acquisition has many benefits to Nigeria national development. They include: elimination of joblessness, reduction of poverty, influencing the society positively, self reliance and independence, development of positive attitude, reduction in crime rate, technological advancement, knowledge acquisition, vending growth process and changes, development of entrepreneurial ability, political stability and higher standard of living. The paper concluded that non-farm skill acquisition centers should be established in every nook and cranny of each states of the country in order to make it more accessible to youths and rural dwellers and well funded by all the three tiers of government non-governmental agencies.

Keywords: *Agricultural, Challenges, Development, Programme, Rural Famers.*

Citation of this article

Olowoporoku, A. J., Babarinde, S. A., Joshua A. O., Ajayi, A., Babarinde, I. A., Shiyabade B. W. and Ajayi, O. A. (2017). Relevance Of Non-Farm Skill Acquisition To National Development In Nigeria. **International Journal of Higher Education and Research**, 7(1), 133-143. www.ijher.com

Introduction

Skill acquisition is a veritable instrument for development of any nation. Skill acquisition has been man's means of material transformation from the earliest of time.

It has been described by many as the recipe for eradicating extreme and hunger by creating avenues for employment and paving ways for job and wealth creation while instilling self-sufficiency and reliance (Isaac, 2011).

Idoko (2014) opined that skill acquisition can be defined as the form of training by individuals or group of individuals that can lead to acquisition of knowledge for sustenance. He further stated that it involves the training of people in different fields of trade under a legal agreement between the trainers and the trainees for certain duration and under certain condition. Ochiagba (1995) defined skill acquisition as the process of demonstrating the habit of active thinking or behaviour in a specific activity.

The importance of skill acquisition cannot therefore be over emphasized in the rapid development of other sectors of the nation's economy. This particularly becomes imperative as a result of the present realities in Nigerian where there is a high rate of unemployment, poverty,

insecurity and youth restiveness as well as kidnapping all over Nigeria. It is in the light of these, that the nation should look inward and make a paradigm shift from mono economy to diversification of its economy. Apart from agriculture where the government is already focusing its attention, skill acquisition in non-farm sectors is another avenue for solving the mirage of problems confronting the country.

In the traditional African society, farming was the main occupation, various non-farm skills were used to complement it. Fasina (2011) noted that some families were reputed for particular skills and this was reflected in family names and names given to their children. For examples, names such as Oderinde Fayemi and Ayanwale all suggest non-farm skills / occupations prevalent in such families. Fafunwa (1991) also posited that non-farm skills can be received within the family for example, if a man is a carpenter, fisherman, bricklayer, barber or drummer, his children can learn directly from him. in the same way, others who are weavers, pot makers, hairdresser, etc. can train their children. Such children may not deliberately learn those skills, but by observing their parents do them, they soon master the skills. Adebayo (1998) also observed that from time immemorial, vocational skills and abilities were passed from one generation to the next, thus corroborating Fafunwa earlier stance. He also listed such skills to include fishing, hunting, weaving and carving.

Fafunwa (1991) classified non-farm skills into trade and crafts including weaving (cloth, baskets, etc), smiting (iron, silver and gold), hunting, carving, building, drumming, hair dressing, pot making, boat making etc.

Ekong (2010) while corroborating Fafunwa identified the following non-farm skills in rural communities in Nigeria: bricklaying, carving carpentry weaving, tailoring, dyeing, clock repairing, hairdressing/barbing, drumming, smiting, welding, vulcanizing, bicycle repairing, mechanics, hairdressing / barbing etc. It is on this note that this study examines the relevance of non-farm skill / acquisition to national development in Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

- i. Review the concept of non-farm skills acquisition
- ii. Examine the methods of non-agricultural skills
- iii. Assess the relevance of non-farm skill acquisition to national development.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years financial resources have been committed to providing various form of technical and vocational skills for youth in country, but the impacts have not been felt (Dokubo, 2010). Over the last decades, successive governments and other non-governmental agencies have embarked on several experiment interventions to impact on the livelihoods of Nigerians. Some of these interventions include the following: National Directorate for Employment (NDE) established April, 2000, National Poverty Eradication programme established 2001, Bank of Industry Youth Entrepreneurship Support Porgramme (YES) 2016 just to mention a view. Ezeji (2005) posited that there had been a lot of youth restiveness, militancy and other social vices that would have been averted in Nigeria if appropriate skills particular in the non-farm were inculcated into these youth. Inspite of the numerous perceived benefits of acquisition of non-farm skills in Nigeria particularly its potential for rural development it has not been fully embraced by youths (Ogunbote et al; Ogundele, 2010).

Most of these non-farm skills were popular in the olden days and in fact contributed immensely to the upkeep of various families and the community at large. Many of these skills are fast disappearing in our urban and rural communities while those still in existence suffer acute shortage of manpower in relation to apprenticeship. Most Nigerian youths show little commitment toward non-farm skill acquisition and prefer to be engaged in other fast daily money making ventures such as “Okada Riding and petty trading such as selling of recharge cards, which are not sustainable. The present situation transmission of these skills to the incoming generation.

It is the light of the above that this study examined the relevance of non-fame skill acquisition to national development in Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

Several works have undoubtedly been carried out in the area of skill acquisition in Nigeria. There is no gain saying the fact that several works have been conducted on relevance of agricultural skills in Nigerian.

However, studies on relevance of non-farm skills seem to have eluded the interest of social-researchers. This paper therefore is essentially aimed to fill this undoubtedly big gap.

The paucity of literature in this area justifies the conduct of this present study and it is hoped that it will fill some gap by providing concrete empirical knowledge on the relevance of non-farm skill acquisition to national development in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Concept of Non-farm skill acquisition

Several scholars and authors have defined skill acquisition in different ways reflecting their bias for specific fields. The 8th edition of Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2010) defines skill as the ability to do something well. Vanpatten and Benati (2010) defined as the ability to do rather than underlying competence or mental representation.

Boyd and Zencing (1999) defined skill acquisition as a mental and physical challenge that requires a good deal of mental and emotional knowledge and understanding as prerequisites to practice and improvement. Skill acquisition is the process of acquiring or gaining effective and ready knowledge in developing one aptitudes and ability in a particular field (Ihebereme, 2010). Skill acquisition involves the development of a new skill, practice or a way of doing things usually gained through training or experience.

According to Speelman (2005) skill acquisition is a gradual developmental process that requires our cognitive (thinking) processes to work with our physical abilities to learning.

Magbagbesola (2004) is of the view that skill acquisition requires the accumulation of a different skill that enhances task performance through the integration of both theoretical and practical forms of knowledge. He enumerated the guidelines for the sustenance of skill acquisition program to include the following:

- Provision of definite skills that relate to each trade that makes one a professional in one field instead of the others.
- Provision of training that gives the trainees the opportunities to acquire skills that are appropriate for preparation in a field of trade for gainful employment.
- The training has to be done by competent, experienced and qualified instructors.
- Skills acquisitions require much practice, patience, interest, ability, aptitude and personality traits.
- Skill acquisition requires conducive environment.

The origin of non-farm skills /activities in Africa (Nigeria inclusive) has a long standing history. The existence of a wide array of non-farm activities in African farming system is readily apparent in the accounts of 19th century explorers. Most likely their range and incidence was far greater in pre-colonial times, prior to the introduction of time-consuming production of export crops and the out-migration of labor villages.

The non-farm activities / skills in urban and areas include all economic activities such as household and non-household manufacturing, handicrafts, processing, repairs, construction, mining and quarrying, trade, communication, community and personal services etc. In addition, non-farm skills play important role to providing supplementary employment to small and marginal farm households, reduce income inequalities and rural-urban migration. Bright et al, (2000) ascertained that in the longer term, the development of non farm sector is a critical factor in providing rural and urban employment and income.

Methods of Acquisition of Non-farm Skills

Non-farm skills can be acquired basically through three methods. They are: traditional method, skill acquisition by apprenticeship and skill acquisition through skill acquisition centers.

- (a) **Traditional method of skill acquisition:** Broom and Selznick (1973) opined that in the traditional method, skills are handed down from generation to generation and are usually learned by imitation and practice in the course of everyday life in traditional societies. Fasina also believed that relevant skills were transferred along generational lines the process of socialization. This implies that families were noted for specific skills which are transferred from generation to another. This method of skill acquisition is however losing prominence and becoming unfashionable due to advent of education and civilization.
- (b) **Skill acquisition by Apprenticeship:** Ryan Wagner and Backes – Cellner (2010) defined apprenticeship as training programmes that combine vocational education with work-based learning for an intermediate occupational skills and that are subject to externally imposed training standards particularly for their work place component.

Pagerranstudio (2010) viewed apprenticeship as involving between a novice, who is usually a minor and a master (usually not the novice's parent) who teaches a trade and who is recompensed for the instruction given in the form of the novice's products.

There are two type of apprenticeship namely:

- (a) Information Apprenticeship
 - (b) Formal Apprenticeship
- (a) **Informal Apprenticeship:** This is a type of apprenticeship whereby a young apprentice learns by way of the observation and imitation from an experienced master craftsman,

acquires the skills of the trade and is inducted into the culture and networks of the business.

- (b) **Formal Apprenticeship:** These types of apprenticeship is characterized by the following:
- i. It is structured and regulated, usually by legislation at national level,
 - ii. It is waged and based in work place
 - iii. It is based on a contract which specifies duration, programme of learning assessment and final certification and the entitlement to off the job learning.
 - iv. It attracts apprentices with higher level of education, more complex skills and is usually located in the urban areas.
- (c) **Skill acquisition through skill acquisition centers:** These are special centers specifically established by governments, non-governmental organization. (NGO's), multinational establishments and international organizations for acquisition of various skills (both farm and non-farm skills) by youth and non-youth alike. The federal and state governments have established vocational and technical schools across the country to impart the needed skills in youths thereby making them employable and self-reliant to contribute their quota to economic growth and development of the country and their immediate communities.

Relevance of Non-farm Skill Acquisition to National Development

The relevance of acquisition of non-farm skills to the development of any nation cannot be over-emphasized. According to Federal Ministry of Education (2004) National Policy on Education, one of the goals of education is the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of his/her society.

Ogundele (2010) submitted that the relevance of non-farm skill acquisition to national development includes:

- (1) Building in the individual the essential skill to become useful within the society
- (2) Making an individual to cultivate better attitude to work thereby become productive and carrying out things the way they should.
- (3) Creating job in abundance and giving rooms for citizen to think positively along the path of economic advancement.

- (4) Eradicating idleness for national development.
- (5) Showcasing one's talent and making use of the brain in terms of new discoveries and innovation that will even upgrade individual status within the society.

In his contribution to relevance of non-farm skill acquisition, Arikpo (2007) ascertained that skill acquisition assists people to acquire the necessary skills and competence for occupation.

Osunde (2004) remarked that it is capable of ensuring gainful employment opportunities to members of the society. Akinpelu (1989) also stated that non-farm skill acquisition programmes can empower people in the following areas.

- (i) It makes persons self-reliant and self-confident;
- (ii) It releases the person's power and energy to act;
- (iii) It frees persons from all shackles in the way of their authentic self development;
- (iv) It restores his humanity; his self-pride the subject, rather than an object, agent rather than a passive recipient of other people's benefactors.

Kolawoke and Adepoju (2007) asserted that the ability to use one's skills gainfully and display one's intellectual and economic horizon well through will go a long way in tackling very effectively many of the economic problems confronting individuals and the country as a whole.

Ikegwu et al, (2014) listed the following as benefits of non-farm skills acquisition to national development in Nigeria. They include:

- Elimination of joblessness in the country
- Reduction of poverty
- Influencing the society positively
- Self-reliance and Independence
- Development of positive attitude toward work and labour
- Reduction of crime rate in the society
- Technological Advancement and Improvement
- Knowledge acquisition.
- Unending growth process and changes.
- Development of entrepreneurial ability.
- Political stability
- Higher standard of living

Conclusion

From the findings, it was established that there are many benefits of non-farm skill acquisition to national development. They include reduction of poverty, elimination of joblessness, self reliance and in dependence, development of positive attitude, reduction in crime rate, technological advancement, unending growth process and changes, development of entrepreneurial ability, political stability etc. It was established skill acquisition will equip the youths and rural dwellers the skills with which to be self reliant.

It was also that the ability to use one's skill gainfully and display one's intellectual and economic horizon well enough will go a long way in tackling effectively many of the problems confronting individuals and the country as a whole.

The paper concluded that non-farm skill acquisition centers should be established in every nook and cranny of each states of the country in order to make it accessible to youths and rural dwellers and well function by all the three tiers of government and non-governmental agencies.

Recommendation

- (i) Skill acquisition centers should be established by the government and non-government agencies in all the nook and cranny of the country.
- (ii) All tertiary institutions should make it mandatory to teach the aspect of non-farm skill acquisition to all students in the country.
- (iii) Soft loans should be introduced to assist joblessness youths and rural dwellers to embark on self help efforts.
- (iv) Government should give adequate attention to skill acquisition development in the country through provision of good economic environment.
- (v) Government should endeavor to properly sensitize these bodies and the general public on the existence and benefit of skill acquisition, therefore encouraging more youths and rural dwellers in the country to key in into the programme.

References

Akinpelu, J. A. (1989). *The Problems of Relevance in the Adult Education Curriculum in Language and Adult Education*. Ibadan: University Press.

- Arikpo, A. B. (2007). Introduction to Philosophy of Adult Education. Calabar: Wusen Publishers.
- Boyd, M. and Zenong, Y. (1999). Cognitive-affective and Behavioural Correlates of Self-Schemata in Sport. *Journal of Sport Behaviour*, pp 22, No 2, pp. 288- 296.
- Bright, H., Davis, J., Janowski, M., Low, A., and Peace, D. (2002). Rural Non-farm Livelihoods in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the Reform Process: *A Literature Review*. NR 112 NFE Report No. 2633.
- Broom, L. and Selznick, P. (1973). Sociology: A text with Adapted Readings. Fifth Edition. New York: Harper and Row Publishers Inc.
- Dokubo, L.N. (2010) Vocational Education Programmes and Empowerment of Rural Adults in Rivers East Senatorial District, Rivers State, Nigeria. An Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Calabar, Cross River State.
- Ekong, E. E. (2010). An Introduction to Rural Sociology. Third Edition. Calabar: Dove Educational Publishers.
- Fafunwa, A. B. (1991) History of Education in Nigeria. Ibadan: NPS Educational.
- Fasina, O. O. (2011) Generation Transfer of skills in Ondo State of Nigeria. Paper presented at the Nigerian Rural Sociological Society Conference. Vol.12.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). National Policy on Education (4th Edition). Lagos: NERD press.
- Idoko, C. U. (2014) Skill Acquisition and Youth Empowerment in Nigeria, *Global Journal of Commence and Management Perspective*. Vol. 3, No 1, pp. 51.54.
- Ihebereme, C. I. (2010). Teachers and Students Perception of the Problems of Effective Skill Acquisition in Senior Secondary School. *Journal of Qualitative Education*. Vol. 6, No 2, pp. 1-6.
- Ikegwu, E. M., Ajiboye, Y. O., Aromolaran, A. D., Ayodeji, A. A. and Okorafor, U. (2014). Human Empowerment Through Skills Acquisition: Issue, Impact and Consequences: A Non-Parametric view. *Journal of Poverty, Investment and Development*. Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 1-10.
- Isaac, N. (2011). Skills Acquisition: Tonic for Economic Empowerment. Leadership Newspaper.
- Kolawole, C. O. O. and Adepoju, T. A. (2007) Developing Functional Literature Citizens in South Western Nigeria. *Education Research and Review* Vol. 2, No 2 pp. 19-25.

- Magbagbeola, N. O. (2004) Theoretical and Conceptual Issues in Economic Sector. CBN *Economic and Financial Review Vol. 42, No 4, pp. 1 – 10.*
- Ochiagba, C. C. (1996) Theory and Practice of Career Development. Enugu: Snaap Press Limited.
- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2010) Oxford University Press. 8th Edition Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ogunbote, S., Zosu, S. J. and Ajibade, T. O. (2006). UBE: The Impact of Technology Education for Nation Building. *Nigerian Association of Teachers of Technology Journal, Vol. 8, pp 108-115.*
- Ogundele, A. G. (2010) Higher Education and Employability in the International Market: The Need for Technical Education. A paper presented at the 1st International Conference Organised by Collaboration of Education Faculties in West Africa (CEFWA) from 8th – 11th February, 2010 at the University of Ilorin.
- Ogundele, A. E., Feyisetan, C. T. and Gana, P. S. (2014) Technical Education as a Vital Tool for Skill Acquisition through Guidance and Counseling for National Building. *American Journal of Educational Research. Vol. 2, No 1, pp. 50-53.*
- Pagerankstudio (2010) Apprenticeship. Anthropological Aspect. Retrieved on November 10, 2015 from <http://paganstudio.com/Blog/Z/10110/apprenticeship-antropological-aspects-2/>
- Ryan, P. K., Wagner, S. T. and Backes-Geliner U. (2010) Trainee pay in Britain, Germany and Switzerland: Markets and Institutions. SKOPE Research paper No. 96 July.
- Speelman, C. (2005) Skill Acquisition: History, Questions and Theories. In C. Speelman and K. Kinser (Eds.), *Beyond the Learning Curve: The construction of mind* Oxford: Oxford University Press.