

Students' Attitude towards Self-Employment in Electronics Occupational Areas in Niger and Benue States, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated students' attitude towards self-employment in electronics occupational areas. Three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. The study was conducted in 12 technical colleges in Niger and Benue States. A survey research design was employed to collect data for the study. Simple Random Sampling technique was employed to sample 84 respondents for the study which consists of sixty (60) electrical/electronic students and twenty four (24) electrical/electronic teachers. A thirty four (34) items questionnaire was used to collect data. Data collected was analyzed using mean and t-test. Findings revealed that students did not show positive attitude toward self-employment in electronics occupation as they do not in the first instance think of self-employment in electronics even at graduation while some believe it is for those who want to sell their skills. It was also revealed that Self-employment is inhibited by students' poor performance, lack of motivation, Cultural believe, lack of qualify teacher to impart the needed skill for self-employment among others. Furthermore, findings indicated among others that recruitment of qualified teacher, creating awareness through public enlightenment on the relevance of self-employment, and empowering the students with relevant job skills as it relates to the electronics industries are ways of improving students' attitude toward self-employment in electronics occupational areas. It was recommended among others that students should be encouraged to seek for self-employment skills through public awareness and provision of adequate training equipment and that the government/recruitment agencies should employ capable hand with skills capable of self-employment in electronics for recruitment.

Keyword: student, attitude, self-employment, electronics, and occupational areas

Introduction

Self-employment could be seen as a situation where a person or persons who by terms of independence or autonomy is/are working on their own account rather than for an employer in a conventional employment relationship. Nigel, Rose, Carta & Davison (2011) observed that for an individual to be self-employed, he or she needs to possess relevant skills needed for self-employment. Self-employment skills are those skills that are necessary for one to work on their own account, from entrepreneurs and small business proprietors to freelancers and subcontractors. These skills include: (a) job specific skills, (b) personal and interpersonal skills and (c) business skills. Job-specific skills are those skills that are necessary for tasks performance in a specific trade or profession. For instance, an electronics technician should possess the skills of detecting fault and symptoms of a problem in an electronic equipment. Personal and interpersonal skills are the skills needed to do things in the day-to-day activities such as creative thinking and problem solving. Business skills are the skills necessary in doing business. In this regard, Igweh (2008) observed that when an individual acquires these skills, such person is capable of establishing his or her own business and even employ others. Merriam (2006) explain further that an individual who has become reliant on business established by his or her own efforts and abilities is said to be self-reliant.

The importance of self-employment to the industrialization of a nation can never be over emphasized. In this regard, Uwaifo (2010) observed that the role of the outcome of self-employment is seen as a tool for promotion of economic growth of the nation. Apart from the role which self-employment plays in the industrialization of a nation, Olaniyan and Ojo (2008) and Thomas and O'Connell (1995) observed that it reduces unemployment significantly in the face of rapid recession of Nigeria economy and white collar job and over dependent on the Government. In a similar vein, National Economic Empowerment and

Development Strategies (NEEDS) (2004) also believes that poverty can be reduced, wealth can be created and quality of life improved when people are trained to be self-employed. Buttressing on the role and need of self-employment Uwaifo (2010) and Kolawole & Arikpo (n.d) acknowledged is the reason that informed the nation and the economists to embrace the form of education capable of availing its recipient self-employment skills as a tool to foster industrialization. In the bid to pursuing this goal the Federal Government of Nigeria (FRN) (2004) outlined several occupational areas through which an individual could become self-employed among which is electronic occupation.

Electronics is the science and technology concerned with the development, behaviour and application of electronics devices and circuits. (<http://dictionary.reference.com>). As defined by Neha (2011) electronics is the study of the flow of electrons in electrical circuits. Electronics occupation can therefore be seen as a vocational area or job that deals with the design and construction, installation, repair or maintenance of electronics devices and equipment, such as interior alarm systems, radio, television, satellite amongst others. Without doubt the tremendous advancement during the last few decades as observed by Neha (2011) in our day to day life involved in the use of electronics devices can never be over emphasized. These roles cut across every sphere of our life and economy as he further maintained. As a result there is need to consciously prepare individual with the requisite knowledge and skills for the purpose of effective exploration of the electronics occupational area. This awareness is evidenced in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) as it particularly acknowledged electronic as an occupational area.

As outlined in the Policy Document FRN (2004) emphasized that for the students to become competent in the electronics occupation they shall be exposed to either three years technical training programme or one year vocational modular programme that will run for three modular years. After which such student is expected to take a career in electronics occupation or continue higher education as the case may be. Furthermore, it's evidenced also in the technical/vocational syllabus that the syllabus is designed to provide the electronics trainee with basic knowledge and practical skills in electrical/electronic repair and maintenance so that at it completion such individual should be able to maintain and repair various kinds of domestic and industrial electronic gadgets. In seeking to impart these skills and knowledge in the students Alison (2012) observed its success is dependent on students' attitudes towards such an occupation.

Attitude is a predisposition or a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person or situation. Attitude influences an individual's choice of action, and responses to challenges, incentive and rewards (<http://www.businessdictionary.com>). Alison (2012) and Paul (2013) reports that literature in general revealed that students success in electronics could depends on their attitude towards the subject. They further observed that positive attitude and habit have been spotted as an ingredient that determines students' success in acquiring skill and knowledge capable of self-employment. However, despite the importance of self-employment to the recession of the country's economy and rising rate of unemployment Christiana, Uhumuavbi & Aguele (2010), Dike (2009) and Uwaifo & Uddin (2009) observed that it is still not clear the extent to which students choose to study occupational trades needed for self-employment. Kennedy (2009) observed particularly that for the electronics occupation, the few students whom have chosen to study electronics trade cannot be self-employed due to unsatisfactory performance which Dike (2009) attributed to the attitude and believe by the students and the public that such occupational area of studies is for the less privileged thereby making the students not to possess the appropriate job competency and skills on graduation due to lack of interest. Nigel, Rose, Carta and Davison (2011) on their part believed that motivation, cultural and attitudinal factors influences both the likelihood of students' venturing into such area and their chance of making a success in electronics occupation. While Dike (2009) and Kennedy (2009) is of the view that students positive attitude towards self-employment in electronics occupations can reduce unemployment in Nigeria.

Presently, there is serious concerned over the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria. For instance, Kolade (2013) stated that no fewer than 40 million Nigerians are unemployed. This is a highly worrisome situation that needs to be tackled headlong. Self-employment is one of the ways out of this ugly situation. However, the slow pace in the increase of self-employment especially in electronics occupational areas in Nigeria and it low patronage by graduates may be traceable to student's attitude towards self-employment. Therefore, it is imperative to determine students' attitude towards self-employment in electronics occupational areas.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate students' attitude towards self-employment in electronics occupational areas in Niger and Benue States, Nigeria. Specifically, the study determined;

1. Students' attitudes towards self-employment in electronics occupational areas.
2. Factors inhibiting students' self-employment in electronics occupational areas.
3. Ways of improving students' attitudes towards self-employment in electronics occupational areas.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What are students attitude toward self-employment in electronics occupational areas?
2. What are the factors inhibiting students self-employment in electronics occupational areas?
3. What are the possible ways of improving students' attitude toward self-employment in electronics occupational areas?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance;

H₀: There is no significance difference in the mean response of students and teachers as regards students' attitude towards self-employment.

Methodology

The design adopted for the study was a survey research design. The study was carried out in 12 technical colleges in Niger and Benue States, Nigeria. Simple Random Sampling technique was employed to sample a total of 84 respondents for the study which consists of sixty (60) electrical/electronic students and twenty four (24) electrical/electronic teachers. The sample for the study was drawn from the 12 Science and Technical Colleges that offer electronics as a course at National Technical Certificate level in Niger and Benue States. A thirty four (34) items questionnaire was used to collect data. The instrument was structured using the four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). These ratings have weights of 4, 3, 2, and 1 beginning from the highest to the lowest respectively. Data collected for the study were analyzed using mean and t-test. A mean of 2.50 and above was considered agreed (A) while responses with mean below 2.50 were considered disagreed (D). A t-calculated less than t-critical was considered accepted while t-calculated more than t-critical was considered rejected.

Results

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on students' attitude toward self-employment in electronics occupational area?

S/N	ITEM	\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	DECISION	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	DECISION
1	Students want self -employment because of the desire to sell their skills and/or expertise in electronics	3.20	1.77	Accepted	2.30	0.62	Rejected
2	Students want to be self -employed in electronics to prove that they can do without government employment	3.50	2.53	Accepted	2.65	1.63	Accepted
3	Students want to be self -employed in order to generate and earn more financial income	3.20	1.79	Accepted	3.0	0.72	Accepted
4	Students will like to be self -employed if they made an ill -informed decision about their first career	1.83	1.43	Rejected	1.20	0.99	Rejected

5	Students will like to be self-employed because of peer or family pressure	2.50	1.03	Accepted	1.60	0.72	Accepted
6	Students prefer to be self-employed if there are no other options of employment	3.00	0.64	Accepted	3.1	0.85	Accepted
7	Students prefer to be self-employed because they want to be employer of labour	2.50	0.40	Accepted	2.55	1.37	Accepted
8	students don't like self-employment in electronics because of the risk involved	1.70	0.63	Rejected	1.30	0.71	Rejected
9	Self-employment in electronics work is not attractive to students because of huge starting capital	3.00	0.65	Accepted	2.50	0.51	Accepted
10	students want self-employment in electronics work so that they can be free from depending on family members for money	3.45	0.49	Accepted	2.15	1.33	Rejected
11	students never thought of self-employment in electronics work as a career choice	2.00	1.03	Rejected	1.40	1.25	Rejected
12	students are planning to open new business outfits in electronics after graduation	2.00	0.64	Rejected	3.00	1.66	Accepted
13	students admire those that succeed in running their own electronics work	3.00	1.03	Accepted	3.45	2.12	Accepted
13	students admire those that succeed in running their own electronics work business	3.00	1.03	Accepted	3.45	2.12	Accepted
14	Self-employment in electronics work is highly desirable	3.00	0.64	Accepted	2.50	0.88	Accepted
15	students still need a lot of time to start thinking of self-employment in electronics work	2.60	1.17	Accepted	2.90	1.77	Accepted

Key: \bar{X}_1 = mean responses of students \bar{X}_2 = mean responses of teachers
 SD_1 = standard deviation of students SD_2 = standard deviation of teachers

The results analysis presented in table1 indicate that both teachers and students agreed with majority of the items as proposed as student's attitude towards self-employment in electronics occupational area with average mean rating ranging between 2.50 to 3.25. However the respondents did not agree with items number 4, 5, 8, 11 and 12 with mean ratings 1.50, 2.00, 1.50, 1.50 and 2.47 whose mean where below acceptance mark

Table 2 : Mean and Standard Deviation on factors inhibiting students' self-employment in electronics occupational area?

S/N	ITEM	\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	DECISION	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	DECISION
1	Students who take electronics occupational areas are the less privilege	1.42	0.50	Rejected	1.18	0.39	Rejected
2	Poor performance often results to students not to possess the required skills to be self-employed in electronics occupation	3.63	0.49	Accepted	2.95	1.27	Accepted
3	Self-employment in electronics area is for the male	2.58	0.58	Accepted	2.12	0.88	Rejected
4	Students who take studying electronics occupational area are not motivated to stay	2.67	1.17	Accepted	3.18	1.37	Accepted
5	Cultural believe restrict the female participation in self-employment in electronics occupational area	2.50	0.88	Accepted	2.53	0.85	Accepted
6	There are no qualified teachers to impart the appropriate skills capable of self-employment in electronics occupational area	2.67	1.27	Accepted	2.86	0.95	Accepted
7	The workshops are dilapidated therefore no equipment/materials for carrying out instructions leading to the acquisition of the needed skills to be self-employed in electronics occupational area	3.38	1.01	Accepted	3.20	0.40	Accepted
8	Parents under mind such certificates because they believe it cannot gain their children/wards further education	2.25	0.99	Rejected	1.76	1.03	Rejected
9	Students are not exposed adequately to industrial avenues capable of fostering appropriate skills/knowledge for self-employment in electronics occupational area	2.92	0.66	Accepted	3.05	0.39	Accepted
10	Students who graduate from such institutes do not want to be self-employed because of inferiority complex	2.88	0.82	Accepted	2.70	0.72	Accepted

Results of table 2 indicates that the respondents agreed with the items listed as factors inhibiting student's attitude towards self-employment in electronics occupational area since majority of the items mean ranting ranged between 2.50 to 3.50 with the exception of items 1, 3 and 8 with mean ratings 1.25, 1.75 and 2.02 respectively.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on the possible ways of improving students' attitude toward self-employment in electronics occupational area?

S/N	ITEM	\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	DECISION	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	DECISION
1	Recruitment of qualified teachers in quality and quantity	2.96	0.91	Accepted	3.50	0.62	Accepted
2	Creating awareness through public enlightenment on the relevance of studies of capable of self -employment in electronics occupational area	2.79	0.20	Accepted	3.08	0.53	Accepted
3	Empowering the students with relevant job skills as it relates to the electronics industries	3.00	0.86	Accepted	3.08	0.65	Accepted
4	Provision of additional workshops	3.25	1.11	Accepted	2.90	0.84	Accepted
5	Provision of modern workshop equipment/materials	3.38	0.81	Accepted	3.55	0.75	Accepted
6	Creating awareness on the need to training male and female on self employment in electronics occupational area	2.71	1.07	Accepted	2.90	1.39	Accepted
7	Motivating students studying courses capable of self -employment in electronics occupation by building more classrooms and renovating/upgrading dilapidated classrooms to modern standard	3.08	0.93	Accepted	3.20	0.57	Accepted
8	Electronics teachers should have the capability of self-employment	2.54	1.35	Accepted	2.95	0.67	Accepted
9	Students who have completed their programmes should be motivated by giving them grant to establish themselves	3.67	0.48	Accepted	3.90	0.30	Accepted

Table 3 shows the mean responses of the respondents as regards ways of improving students' attitude toward self-employment in electronics occupational area. The result indicates mean ratings ranging between 2.83 – 3.83. This shows that the respondents agreed with all the items proposed as strategies to improving students' attitude toward self-employment in electronics occupational area.

Table 4: t-test analysis of students' attitude toward self-employment in electronics occupational area

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-calc.	df.	Decision
Students	60	2.70	1.06	0.065	82	Accepted
Teachers	24	2.37	1.14			

Result of table 4 indicates the t-test analysis of the attitude of student's toward self-employment in electronics occupational area. From the table t-calculated 0.065 is less than the t-table 2.01 value at 0.05, level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted thus, there is no significance difference in the mean response between the respondents as regards students' attitude towards self-employment in electronics occupational area.

Findings

1. Students' did not show positive attitude toward self-employment in electronics occupation as they do not in the first instance think of self-employment in electronics even at graduation while some believe it is for those who want to sell their skills. Also Students perceive self-employment from the perspective that it is required only when there are no other options of employment and fear of the huge starting capital, to the extent that students still need a lot of time to start thinking of self-employment.
2. Self-employment is inhibited by students' poor performance, lack of motivation, Cultural believe, lack of qualify teacher to impart the needed skill for self-employment, dilapidated equipment/materials in our institutions, lack of industrial skill and the believe that self-employment in electronics occupation is for the students that could not performed well in school.
3. As way for improving students attitude towards self-employment in electronics occupation the following were suggested: recruitment of qualified teacher, creating awareness through public enlightenment on the relevance of self-employment, empowering the students with relevant job skills as it relates to the electronics industries, provision of additional workshops/equipment, creating awareness on the need to training male and female gender alike, and motivating students by giving them grant to be self-employed on graduation.
4. There was no significance difference between students and teacher the mean response as regards students' attitude towards self-employment in electronics occupational area.

Discussion

The findings of this study as presented in Table 1 shows students' attitude towards self-employment in electronics occupational area. Findings revealed that students attitude towards self-employment in electronics occupation is not good enough. This is because majority of students does not believe in becoming self-employed at all while some sees self-employment as occupation for those who are pushed into it by peers and family members. Other attitude of students towards self-employment is hinged on the perspectives of their perception of self-employment thus, it is believed self-employment is required only when there are no other options of employment and fear of the huge starting capital, to the extent that students still need a lot of time to start thinking of self-employment. These attitudes demonstrated here as observed by Alison (2012) and Paul (2013) shows that over the years the students had not developed positive attitude toward self-employment. Consequently, the importance of self-employment to the individual enumerated by Olaniyan & Ojo (2008) and Thomas & O'Kinneide (1995) cannot be achieved. The diverse effect will now be on the society at large as the industrialization and economic independence Nigeria clamoured to attain in 2020 is threatened.

Table 2 shows findings on factors inhibiting self-employment in electronics occupation. It was found out that one of the factors militating against self-employment in electronics occupation as a result of poor performance in the course. Other inhibiting factors are rooted in cultural believe that the electronics occupational areas are only for the male thereby depriving the female gender such opportunity of becoming self-employed. It is shown also that lack of qualify teacher to impart the needed skill for self-employment, dilapidated equipment/materials in our institutions, lack of industrial skill, motivation and the believe that self-employment in electronics occupation is for the students that could not performed well in school are all spotted as factors inhibiting self-employment in electronics occupation. These findings are in line with those of Dike (2009) and Kennedy (2009) who in separate studies revealed that self-employment is affected by such factors.

Table 3 shows possible ways of improving students' attitude towards self-employment in electronics occupation. Respondents are of the view that recruitment of qualified teachers, creating awareness through public enlightenment on the relevance of self-employment, empowering the students with relevant job skills as it relates to the electronics industries, provision of additional workshops/equipment, creating awareness on the need to training male and female alike, and motivating students by giving them grant to be self-employed on graduation can significantly improve students attitude towards self-employment in electronics occupation. This is in line with the observation by Kolawole and Abam (2010), Uwafu and Udding (2009) and Dike (2009) that on the bid to empowering electronics students with relevant job skills that would enhance their productivity, all challenging factors such as those mentioned above must be taken care of.

The t-test analysis presented in table 4 showed a no significance difference in the mean response between the teachers and students as regards students' attitude towards self-employment in electronics occupational area. This implies that the opinion of both teachers and students does not differ significantly on students attitudes toward self-employment in electronics occupation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Even though self-employment has been spotted as a sure way of fostering the industrialization and economic growth of the nation, reduction in unemployment and improvement of citizen's life, if it was found out that students attitude towards self-employment is not encouraging. It was therefore recommended that schools should empower the students with relevant job skills especially in electronics workshops/equipment in schools electronics is offered, stakeholders in education should create awareness through public enlightenment on the relevance of self-employment. At large the government and institutions charged with the responsibility of staff recruitment are requested to seek for qualified and capable hands with skills needed for self-employment for recruitment with attractive remuneration which will serve as motivation that will attract them to stay.

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