

## ***Employment Capacity and Literacy Relativity in Nigeria: The Entrepreneurial Training Implications in the Organisation of Flexible Learning***

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### **Abstract**

This is an empirical discourse on the relativity of employment capacity and literacy in Nigeria, and the consequent entrepreneurial training implications for flexible learning. The study had the following scientific qualities: Significance testing of  $P < .01$ , a null hypothesis, secondary data source, participants' average age of 29.5 years, survey design, non-probability cluster sampling, interval measurement, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, and descriptive statistics. The result of the statistical analyses of the data accepted the null hypothesis that employment capacity in Nigeria did not significantly increase proportionately with literacy. Thus, employment capacity in Nigeria has almost reached its saturation-point, while literacy rate is just about the average-point. The result, having a negative outcome, indicated a disproportionate relationship between employment capacity and literacy in Nigeria. Flexible learning as a literacy programme cum policy should, therefore, be modeled towards entrepreneurial training of the learners. The essence of this is to expand the employment competency of individuals, and the employment elasticity cum opportunities of the Nigerian society.

*Keywords: Employment, literacy, entrepreneur, training, flexible learning.*

## **Introduction**

Background to the Study: Expectedly, every society strives to maintain sustainable employment systems for its population. The importance of this cannot be overemphasised since working is inevitable in the lives of individuals (Nwankwo, 2006). Therefore, quality human resources of every society is provided through literacy programmes which include both formal and non-formal learning. Thus, educational training equips individuals with the skills and competency to be functionally resourceful in society. Through such educational training, individuals are expected to effect constructive and progressive changes (Baker, 2001).

Formal learning embraces the regular full-times, or part-time educational activities that are carried out at specific locations, and usually in learning institutions with well-designated physical structures. On the other hand, non- formal learning is a flexible and special educational opportunity, which focuses on ameliorating the socio-personal barriers that inhibit individuals from taking advantage of formal education. Both types of educational opportunities focus on enhancing the realisation of full human and environment potentials. The effect of this becomes evident when the mental and social changes of people are stimulated to become productive as the bane of development is curbed (Oyenuga, 2007). Flexible learning is a relatively convenience-based educational opportunity. It is an innovation in the educational system which tries to explore, adjust and adapt, as well as extend educational opportunities to the greatest number of people possible by using the immense possibilities of the information-age. This means that education and learning are organised like work so that they can be done anywhere by using modern socioeconomic facilities (Voigt, 2001).

A practical instance of flexible learning is the open and distance learning (ODL) programme. When well-structured and organised, flexible learning provides quality and meaningful learning opportunities using appropriate techno-science, learner support and practice session. Literacy as a societal value is enhanced through such enabling attributes of flexible learning as accessibility, equality, equity, quality, affordability, flexibility, openness, responsiveness, innovativeness, etc. Flexible learning is therefore a social entrepreneurship (Kehinde, 2006) for self-help and self-development actualisation. Inasmuch as flexible learning is a counterpart programme to formal learning, all with the same vision of Education for All (EFA), efforts should be made to ensure that the functional value of learning (education) is not compromised. The organisation and policy implementation of flexible learning programme have to conform to values that enhance success even at quite inconvenient times (Nwakogo, 2008). Understandably, this is a challenging goal since flexible learning is designed primarily with the targets of extending opportunities to individuals to improve their knowledge/education base. Such learning opportunities transcend all barriers in order to achieve a comprehensive reach across all the psychosocial groups in society. Flexible learning, therefore,

does discriminate against gender, ethnicity, educational background, race, tribe, religion, socioeconomic status, etc.

Being a self-developing and friendly opportunity, flexible learning is open for all, such as those limited by socio-cultural practices, those in specialized locations like prison, orphanage, monastery, the disabled, workers, drivers, traders, those in the force, the poor, the rich etc. while individuals are born with certain innate potentials, learning and literary help these potentials to functionally flourish. And functional human resources are the drivers of sustainable development. Essentially, sustainable development is linked to work (Obi, 2007). Work helps individuals and society to flourish as it provides an avenue of sustainable well-being. As a society develops its employment capacity also improves. Employment capacity in relation to a society is its capability to provide qualitative and meaningful work avenues for the population; in relation to an individual its is the ability to effectively understand and do something; and in relation to an organization it is the power, quality, and size of the human resources it can meaningfully and healthy absorb.

### **Statement of the Problem**

To prevent corporate cum socio-economic failure and crime (Umeora, 2008) the relationship between employment capacity and literary should be enhanced. The relationship is unhealthy when society and its employment opportunities cannot provide work for the greatest percentage of the literate population, which is desirous of working. There is also an unhealthy relationship between the employment capacity and literacy when literate individuals who are desirous of working are unemployable (incompetent). Consequently, the policy and organization of flexible learning should focus beyond creating learning opportunity that procures paper certification/qualification for the learner. Skillful potentials for individuals should be encouraged at all times, in addition to more practical, effective, and functional policy as guides (Iteku, Iteku, and Oku, 2007) to learning at all levels of the flexible learning. This is synonymous with making flexible learning the enhancer of entrepreneurship. The value of this is that such entrepreneurial training will stimulates practical creativeness, which will reengineer resources and opportunities is new ways (Worlu, 2007) that will promote employment sustainability. One of the indices of societal development is the opportunity to work that are accessible to the citizens. Yearly, many graduates are trained for Nigerian society. Very unfortunately, so seemingly (outwardly) corresponding provisions are made for their gainful engagements in employment opportunities.

### **Aim of the Study**

The focus of this study is to examine the relationship between employment capacity and literacy rate in Nigeria. The relationship seems unhealthy when there is an imbalance in the manifestation of the developmental parameters (employment

opportunity vis-a-vis literacy) in society. In a situation like this, both or any of the socio-human development parameters is either under or over utilised. On the other hand, it seems a healthy relationship when both the developmental parameters are correspondingly available, increasing, and accessible to the citizens. Here, there is a near optimum or optimum utilisation of the socio-human developmental parameters. A study like this one is absolutely important for the strategic socio-human developmental policy of Nigeria. This is a major way of modeling Nigeria's socio-human development to be in consonance with the Millennium Development Goal (MDG). The implications of the results of this study for entrepreneurial training in flexible learning are consequently expounded in the course of discussing the findings.

## Methodology

The significance level of the study was tested at  $P < 0.01$ . One proposition (hypothesis/ research question) was tested in the study.

**Proposition:** One null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was tested in the study. And it states that the employment capacity in Nigeria does not significantly increase proportionately with literacy. In the same vein, the corresponding research question examines whether the employment capacity existing in Nigeria correspondingly increases with the literacy level. In order to find out the nature of the relationship between employment capacity and literacy in Nigeria, inferences were made from the secondary raw data collected and statistically analysed. The secondary data on the level of major socioeconomic indicators of Nigeria household were obtained from the Federal Office of Statistics, Nigeria. The survey documented the distribution of working age group persons by occupations and industries, and literacy rate by age group for thirty (30) states and Abuja (National Report, 2000). While the data for literacy rate were given in percentage and directly taken like that, the researcher, however, had to convert the working age group into percentage as the data were not given in percentage; i.e number of persons employed divided by the total number of persons and multiplied by hundred. The essence of this is to have a uniform notation that will enhance easy statistical analyses and inferences. The study's participants were both male and female with the average age of 29.5 years.

The design for the study was survey and the sampling technique was cluster. Again, the extraneous variables were controlled through supervision and quality control (National Report, 2000:VI). Basically, survey is used when participants are to be sampled from a very large population. Again, non- probability cluster sampling is employed when the population to be sampled from is composed of sub-units or strata. By this, the sampling is done among the sub-units or strata (Akuezulo and Agu, 2003). The statistical analyses for the collected data were Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, for the data used to test the relationship attained interval measurement. Again, relevant descriptive statistics were used to

expound the implications of the result.

## Result and Discussion

**Hypothesis (Proposition):** The hypothesis states that employment capacity does not significantly increase proportionately with literacy. With the analyses of the collected data using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, the null hypothesis is accepted as there is a negative correlation (Table 1.1).

**Table 1: Person correlation Analyses of Employment capacity with Literacy in Nigeria**

Variables	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	Mean Percentage X%	SD	N	df	robs	r-critical	P<.01
Employment capacity	2894.85	271100.20	93.38	5.07	31	29	-0.0171	.4487	Significant
Literacy	1613.67	104129.76	52.05	25.91					
Total	4508.52	375229.96							
Critical values (df = 29), r obs = -0.0171, P<.01 Accept H o; Critical Mean(X) = 50									

Table 1.1 above shows the r-observed (-0.017) value being negative and less than the r-critical (.4487) table value. Consequently, the null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted. The implication of this is that employment capacity in Nigeria does not increase significantly with the rate of literacy in Nigeria. The negative sign (-0.0171) indicates that as the literacy rate increases, the employment capacity reduces. Thus, literacy rate and employment capacity in Nigeria are at the opposite sides of the developmental continuum.

Again, there is a very wide disparity in the employment capacity and literacy rate in Nigeria. While employment capacity in Nigeria with the mean percentage (93.38%) has almost reached its saturation-point, the literacy state with the mean percentage 52.5) is the average-point and is on the increase. It should not be out of place to categorically state that many occupations and organisations in Nigeria may have more human resources in their employment than are socio-economically relevant and beneficial. As a result, not every employee works at the level established by the standard of performance for the job he or she holds (James, 2007).

Similarly, the standard deviation (SD) of employment capacity is 5.07, while that of literacy state is 25.91. This implies that the known and explored employment avenues in Nigeria have far too little elasticity to meaningfully accommodate new human resources entrants into the jobs. On the other hand, the elasticity for self-development through learning cum literacy is still enormous with the present literacy facilities available in Nigeria.

The outcome of the study could be attributed to the fact that too many literate persons

in Nigeria desire to be employed in the already existing employment opportunities. And this leads to employment capacity overload as more job opportunities are not invented or created simultaneously with increase in employment seekers. Therefore, the necessity of the above result is the urgent need for reorientation in the learning and literacy goals in Nigeria. Such reorientation should embrace tenaciously entrepreneurship, which according to Worlu (2007) entails a movement from something known to something unknown. And it is a movement from the present lifestyles of clamouring for the already existing employment avenues to forming or creating new enterprises. This should be a driving and motivating value of flexible learning. In this, the organisation and management of flexible learning should make strategic decisions that touch on the central concern of providing solution to problems (inability to create work), as well as accelerate socioeconomic development (Aibieyi and Fenemigho, 2006) of employment invention.

The policy of flexible learning should not necessarily be to empower individuals educationally, but also to make them human resources for innovation, creativity, and reformation. It is through this noble policy that the scope of employment capacity and elasticity of Nigerian society can expand or be improved on. This is synonymous with making flexible learning an entrepreneurs-producer education opportunity. Often, individuals clamour for particular employment avenues, without realising that there are some or even better fields of human endeavours that offer better qualities of life (Nwankwo, 2008). The organisation of flexible learning should, therefore, become entrepreneurship itself in order to create entrepreneurial training in individuals. The end target of this chain of resourcefulness in the policy of flexible learning is to produce employment creators rather than employment seekers.

As a partner in education, provision for progress and development, flexible learning policy should anchor so much in alleviating poverty. Such developmental ambition can be achieved when flexible learning is programmed to be a practical self-sustainable educational training. As a result, flexible learning will become an effective panacea to poverty, which is caused by illiteracy, unemployment, and lack of basic skills (Onele, 2008). Individuals and society at large are endowed with enormous potentials and possibilities. And these opportunities are identified and benefited from, only when individuals are well-prepared to make efforts despite all odds. In entrepreneurial training, such as the one advocated for flexible learning, individuals should be made change agents by embracing challenges and coming out with results. Socioeconomic and wealth-creation opportunities the information-age are changing rapidly. There is no way Nigeria can partake in influencing the information-age of globalisation if it does not have capable human resources (Okon, 2008). Such human resources must be entrepreneur. ai pragmatic, desirous, and zealous to see new opportunities of exploring and creating employment and socioeconomic benefits from situations, though not to the extent of human dehumanisation.

There is entrepreneurship in all facets of human endeavours. What is lacking is for an individual to dare mistakes and criticisms and explore the alternative methodologies of bringing equally effective results. By implication, the organisation of flexible learning should brace up to the challenges of producing human resources that should not adhere to the traditional employment “seekers” instead of employment “creators/finders”. Flexible learning that is entrepreneurial-modeled will help immensely to reduce unproductive labour and poverty. It will also help in reducing the inefficiency caused by improper placements. Inefficient individuals render “eye services” duties, gossip in the workplace, point fingers, witch-hunt others, and make themselves available for discreditable duties. Inefficient and unproductive individuals are, therefore, the sympathisers of “quota system” (Oghuvbu, 2007). The organisation of flexible learning should thus be based on entrepreneurial training that should make education employment functional.

### **Precis of Findings**

The study found out the following relative issues:

- (1) The employment capacity does not increase significantly with the rate of literacy in Nigeria. In fact, there is a negative correlation between employment capacity and literacy rate in Nigeria. Thus, the employment capacity in Nigeria is almost at the saturation-point, while the literacy level is just at the average-point. Essentially, the literacy rate and employment capacity in Nigeria are in the opposite sides of the developmental continuum. The cause of this finding could be explained from the perspective that virtually all the increasing literate persons in Nigeria desire to be employed in the already existing employment opportunities. The consequence of this is employment capacity overload as more job opportunities are not invented or created simultaneously with the ever-increasing literate unemployed individuals.
- (2) By implication, the Nigerian educational policy is not entrepreneurship-modeled, or not entrepreneurially efficacious. Learning in the Nigerian educational institutions is primarily focused on procuring paper qualifications/certifications for the learners. The policy of flexible learning should not necessarily be to empower individuals educationally, but also to make them human resources for self-entrepreneurship and self-sustenance. The organisation of flexible learning should, therefore, become entrepreneurship itself in order to create entrepreneurial training in individuals.
- (3) From the findings, it is very clear that the strategic goal of using education (training) to hamper the prevalence of poverty in Nigerian society is still very elusive. It is either that the education curricula are effective to initiate wealth-creation prowess in individuals, or that what is lacking is the socio –

human dispositions for resolving unemployment challenges. Poverty is endemic in the Nigerian society because of the enormous clamour for the already existing employment avenues, which have almost attained the saturation-point. This clamour is a life-style of being work seekers rather than work creators. By implication, most literate Nigerians use their educational training cum intellect to create wealth for others (their possible employers), rather than using that socio-personality (educational training-intellect) asset/capital to brainstorm for themselves for wealth creation opportunities. As its own contribution towards the concerted efforts to tackle the problem of poverty in Nigeria, the training programme of the flexible learning should be modeled to enhance work-creation entrepreneurship.

### **Conclusion**

The discourse in this study centred on finding the relativity of employment capacity and literacy in Nigeria; and the consequent implications for the organisation of flexible learning in the country. Actually, it was found that while the employment capacity in the country had almost reached its saturation-point, the literacy state was just about the average-point. By implication, far too many human resources are employed in the known and already existing employment avenues in Nigeria. The consequences of this trend could be human resources that are redundant, inefficient and unproductive. Therefore, flexible learning being a type of human resources development programme must see the need and design strategy for reversing this unhealthy ratio in employment capacity and literacy state. In other words, entrepreneurial training should be incorporated in designing flexible learning.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are streamlined for emphasis: (1) The entrepreneurial training should focus on making individuals employment “creators/ finders” instead of employment “seekers”. (2) The entrepreneurial training of the flexible learning should be designed to instill in the learners (trainees/ students) the development personality of daring and courage to explore alternative employment opportunity less or rarely engaged in. (3) Ancillary to the above is that flexible learning should be made very efficacious to develop in the learners the sensitivity and *deja-vu* mental models of seeing employment opportunities in their environment. (4) Again, to attain a successful entrepreneurial training through flexible learning, the learners should be well equipped to embrace and cope with mistakes and failures, which are inevitable features of success. (5) As an educational opportunity, the entrepreneurial training of flexible learning should anchor on driving and motivating the value of making individuals reformers who are change agents. (6) Such entrepreneurial training as advocated for flexible learning should be based on reorienting an achieving life-style of embracing

challenges, and coming out with results, through sustained efforts despite all odds, (7) In addition, the organisation and management of flexible learning should be entrepreneurship themselves and in practical terms, in order not to have a derailed focus, target, and value of inculcating resourcefulness and entrepreneurial training duals. (8) Finally, meticulous observance of the above recommendations will immensely model flexible learning programme to be an entrepreneurial educational opportunity, of counteracting the disproportionate socioeconomic trend cum development in employment capacity and literacy state in Nigeria.

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