

DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS IN FURNITURE MAKING OF TECHNICAL COLLEGE GRADUATES TO ENHANCE ECONOMIC STABILITY IN NIGERIA: EVIDENCE FROM KOGI STATE

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ABSTRACT

Furniture making trade is among the woodwork technology programs offered in technical colleges in Nigeria. Furniture making programmer requires that the trainees acquired knowledge and skills in order to enable them produce different types of furniture items thereby enhancing their economic stability and that of the nation. The study was designed to develop entrepreneurship skills in furniture-making for improvement of technical college graduates. The sample for this study comprised 132 entrepreneurs and 16 furniture-making instructors; giving a total of 148 respondents randomly selected in Kogi State. The instrument for data collection was the structured questionnaire. Each item in the instrument was assigned a five point scale and the response options of Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Undecided = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree = 1 respectively. The questionnaire was validated by lecturers, entrepreneurs and a technical college instructor. Cornbrash Alpha method was used to ascertain reliability coefficient value of 0.71 for the instrument. The data collected were analyzed using Mean (\bar{x}) score analysis from five-point Likert scale to answer the research questions. The result of the findings revealed that, suitable objectives of entrepreneurship skill to be included in the training, among others are: simple business plan, determine competing industries in furniture making. Six skill areas for inclusion in entrepreneurship skills training in furniture making include among others: technical skills, business planning skills, financial management skills, management skills. Facilities needed for teaching and learning include: percussion and impelling tools, machine power tools, computers, etc. The following recommendations among others were proffered: governments should fund technical education adequately; technical education curriculum should include the identified entrepreneurship skills into technical college curriculum; and technical college administrators should organize seminars and workshops on entrepreneurial skills acquisition for technical teachers.

Keyword: Entrepreneurship Skills, Furniture Making, Economic stability

1. INTRODUCTION

Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) is acknowledged as a tool for transforming and empowering individuals with necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to enable them become productive economically. VTE trains the mind, moderate character, sharpens the innate ability of skilled craftsmen who are eager to attain self-actualization and economic independence after graduation from technical college. Technical colleges are post-primary institutions that run vocational education programs, and offer vocational trades and subjects in order to equip individual with appropriate knowledge and skills required for paid jobs or self-employment (Okoro, 2006).

National Board for Technical Education (NBTE, 2003) listed woodworking trades offered in technical college to include: block laying and concreting, carpentry and joinery, upholstery and furniture making. Furniture making trade in technical colleges is among the woodworking technology programs in Nigeria offered in technical colleges. It is expected to expose the trainees to various skills, knowledge and attitudes in order to enable them produce different types of furniture items using woodworking facilities and consumables. Furniture making is the practice of using various woodworking skills to create cabinets, shelving and furniture. It involves technique such as creating appropriate joints with the use of tool such as routers to produce decorative edgings. Furniture are household articles for use or decoration; it may be movable item made from wood, metal, plastic, etc. such as tables, chairs, cupboards, shelves and cabinets. According to Austin (2010) furniture making is the practice of using various woodworking skills to create cabinets, shelves and chairs. Furniture making is primarily concerned with the design, construction, repair, marketing of chairs, tables and cabinets.

However, furniture making products to be designed, constructed, and distributed to the targeted market depend on the preference of the customers and the level of intelligence and understanding of the increasingly complexity of technological innovation of the entrepreneurs.

Susan (2013) defined entrepreneurs as an individual who have a talent for seeing opportunities into profit-making enterprise so as to maximize profit, solve problems, employs others and plan for the future. It may be small or medium enterprise self-employed craftsmen.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2004) reported that craftsmen in technical college programs are part of the human resources required by any nation for effective sustenance of economic growth and development. Shobowale(2015), observed that in every economy, the craftsmen are recognized as technical college graduates, most reliable vehicles of socio-economic growth. The contributions of craftsmen sub-sector, according to Alade (2004) include: job creation, utilization of local materials, poverty reduction, developments of indigenous technologies and entrepreneurship development.

In spite of the important roles of craftsmen as catalyst for economic growth and development, the International Finance Council (IFC, 2001), observed that lack of book-keeping, accounting record, inadequate financial management skills, among others, constrain entrepreneurs in developing countries from sourcing for finance from relevant agencies. However, the need to link furniture making enterprise to flourishing investment opportunities is fundamental to entrepreneurship skill development.

Amasa (2010) defined entrepreneurship skills as that capabilities or abilities to perceive business opportunities, take advantage of the scarce resources, control and coordinate available human and material resources in an enterprise. Timmons and Spinalli (2004) noted that the entrepreneurship skills needed to be learnt by craftsmen in order to excel include: self motivation skills, self-confidence skills, sales skills, financial management skills, supervisory skills and managerial skills. Content component of entrepreneurship skills appropriate for improvements of craftsmen in furniture making include: technical skills, business planning skills, financial management skills, management skills, self-motivational skills, communication skills and marketing skills.

An examination of the current NBTE (2009) curriculum revealed non inclusion of basic entrepreneurship skills in furniture making programs. There is therefore, the need to investigate those basic entrepreneurship skills needed to be introduced into furniture making program in order to enhance economic stability in Nigeria.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Entrepreneurship skills training is aimed at equipping craftsmen with the appropriate entrepreneurship skills of operating their own small and medium scale enterprise. Small and medium scale enterprises are known as tools for generating sustainable economic industrial growth, employment and investment. Based on this facts, governments and stakeholders, have made several efforts to improve and promote the development of craftsmen sub-sector in Nigeria, through the establishment of agencies like, Small and Medium Industrial Equity Investment Fund (SMIEIS); National Economic and Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND); Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), etc.

Despite all the programs of assistance to small medium scale enterprises in Nigeria, Kogi State craftsmen appear not to be attaining the expected industrialization and socio-economic development. Craftsmen are supposed to apply the basic science and technology of entrepreneurship skills to analyze markets, use effective communications network, and maintain accurate and consistent records. The craftsmen need to be determined, brave, dynamic, innovative, creative and resourceful.

Technical college curriculum appears to be deficient in entrepreneurship skills for craftsmen to set up and flourish in an enterprise after graduation. Many products of technical colleges after graduation seem not to have ability to build a strategy that can be used to analyze their capabilities and have an understanding of market forces and competitors.

At present there exists in the state the inability of craftsmen to plan well, communicate clearly both within and outside the enterprise, lack of good management of both human and material resources, customer services and public relations, simple self-motivation skills, financial management skills, marketing skills etc. Inadequate of these skills may be due to inadequate preparation during training which may be due to low entrepreneurship skill levels of technical teachers, inadequate innovative facilities, inappropriate teaching method and ineffective evaluation techniques.

The question now is, how adequate is the course content of furniture making with respect to entrepreneurship skills for preparing technical college craftsmen to face those challenges in Kogi State. These challenges can be overcome by applying appropriate entrepreneurship skills training contents. Presently, there is no comprehensive entrepreneurship skills content in furniture making trade in Nigeria, to enable them set up, operate and flourish in their own enterprises economically. Therefore, there is need to develop entrepreneurship skills in the course content of furniture making to enhance the economic stability of craftsmen in Kogi State.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to develop entrepreneurship skills in furniture making for improvement of craftsmen in Kogi State. Specifically, the study is to identify:

1. Objectives suitable for entrepreneurship skills content of furniture makings;
2. Content appropriate to be included in entrepreneurship skills in furniture making programme.
3. Facilities needed for trainings in entrepreneurship skills in furniture making programme.

The result of this study will be of benefit to furniture making students, craftsmen, instructors, society, technical colleges, industries, curriculum planners and developers, parents, government and educational researchers.

1.4 Research Questions

The followings research questions were formulated to guide this study:

1. What are the objectives suitable for entrepreneurship skills content in furniture making?
2. What are the contents appropriate to be included in entrepreneurship skills in furniture making program?
3. What are the facilities needed for training in entrepreneurship skills in furniture making program?

2. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The study adopted Research and Development (R & D) design. R & D, according to Gall, Gall and Borg (2003) is an industrial-based development approach involving the use of research findings to design and develop programs and materials which assist in improving knowledge and skills.

2.1 Area of Study

The study was carried out in Kogi state, North Central Nigeria.

2.2 Population of the Study

The population for this study consists of one hundred and thirty two (132) entrepreneurs and sixteen (16) furniture making instructors which bring the total to one hundred and forty eight (148) respondents. They were randomly selected from major towns of the state.

2.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

There was no sampling because the population (Respondents) were manageable.

3. INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

Structured questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection for this study. The questionnaire was divided into two parts A and B. Part A was to obtain personal data of the respondents, while part B consisted of three (3) research questions, made of sixty eight (68) item statements.

Each of the item in the instrument was assigned a five point linker response scales and the response were, Strong Agree (SA); Agree (A); (Undecided (U); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) with the number values of 5,4,3,2 and 1 respectively.

3.1 Validation of the Instrument

The questionnaire was designed by the researcher based on the purpose and research questions of the study. The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation by five experts. The experts are: two chief lecturers from the department of VTE Federal College of Education (Technical) Gusau, two entrepreneurs from furniture making industries, Lokoja and one technical instructor, from a technical college that offers furniture making in Kogi state. The validated questionnaire was corrected and modified to make up the sixty eight (68) questionnaire items that was adopted for the study.

3.2 Reliability of the Instrument

To determine the internal consistency of the research instrument, 20 copies of the questionnaire was administered to sample of 20 respondents which comprises 6 technical instructors in Government Technical Colleges and 14 entrepreneurs in the registered furniture making industries in Niger state. Their responses were subjected to Cranach Alpha reliability coefficient using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). The coefficient of 0.71 was obtained.

4. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using mean score analysis from five-point linker scale for answering the research questions based on items on questionnaire. The coding of the

response scale and the response opinions of the questionnaire include: Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Undecided (U) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

A mean of 3.50 was used as the cut-off point for decision making on each item. Based on these values, all items with the mean of 3.50 or above were considered as "Agreed" (A) responses, while all items with mean below 3.50 were considered as "Disagree" (D) response.

4.1 Presentation and Analysis of Data

Research Question 1

What are the objectives suitable for entrepreneurship skills content in furniture making?

The data for answering research questions are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Respondents Opinions on the Objectives Suitable for Entrepreneurship Skills in Furniture Making

S/N	Objective Suitable	X	Remark
1.	Identify content component of entrepreneurship skills in furniture making	4.19	Agree
2.	Conceptualize craftsmen entrepreneur, entrepreneurship skills in furniture making	3.52	Agree
3.	Identify appropriate business opportunities in furniture making	4.20	Agree
4.	Identify appropriate facilities needed for entrepreneurship skills training in furniture making	4.19	Agree
5.	Determine competing industries in furniture making	4.14	Agree
6.	Develop simple business plan in furniture making	4.26	Agree

The result of data analysis presented in table 1 indicated that the six statement objectives of entrepreneurship skills in furniture making were found suitable for improvement of craftsmen. The Means values of the items ranged from 3.52 to 4.26.

Research Question 2

What are the contents appropriate to be included in entrepreneurship skills in furniture making program?

The data for answering research question 2 are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Respondents Opinions on Content Appropriate for Inclusion in Entrepreneurship Skills in Furniture Making

S/N	Content Appropriate (Technical skills)	X	Remarks
	Ability to:		
1.	State occupational health and safety in furniture making	4.15	Agree
2.	Administer appropriate first aid procedures in furniture workshops	4.17	Agree
3.	Produce detail design drawing of furniture products using ICT skills	4.34	Agree
4.	Interpret designs/working drawings of furniture making	4.22	Agree
5.	Prepare cutting list from working drawing in furniture with wood processing software	4.23	Agree
6.	Construction of various types of furniture articles using ICT manufacturing software	4.20	Agree
7.	Apply adhesives to furniture construction works appropriate	4.32	Agree
8.	Apply finishes on furniture construction works appropriately	4.30	Agree
9.	Apply fasteners, fittings and accessories on furniture construction works	4.18	Agree
10.	Complete work operations in furniture construction	4.34	Agree
11.	Package finished furniture making product for marketing	4.25	Agree
	Business planning skills		
12.	State business planning skills in furniture making	4.18	Agree
13.	Outline specific business goals for furniture making	4.15	Agree
14.	Locate a suitable site for furniture making industry	4.24	Agree
15.	Locating a suitable environment for showroom to display furniture	4.15	Agree
16.	Develop a simple business plan for furniture making	4.14	Agree
17.	Write a company description for furniture making products	4.12	Agree
18.	Analyze market for finished furniture products	4.15	Agree
19.	Plan sale strategies for finished furniture products	4.16	Agree

Financial Management Skills			
20.	Identify financial management skills in furniture making	4.13	Agree
21.	Prepare financial statements furniture making	3.91	Agree
22.	Prepare a simple budget for furniture making products	4.22	Agree
23.	Source funds for furniture making		Agree
24.	Obtain loans for furniture making construction works	3.96	Agree
25.	Identify facilities and consumables needed for furniture making	4.16	Agree
26.	Explain cost analysis in furniture making	4.15	Agree
27.	Procure facilities and consumables for furniture making	3.96	Agree
28.	Prepare purchasing needs record for furniture making products	4.01	Agree
Management Skills			
29.	Outline management skills in furniture making	4.30	Agree
30.	Formulate business goals in furniture making	4.14	Agree
31.	Set standards on the attainment of business organizational objectives	4.14	Agree
32.	Create conducive working environment for furniture making	4.18	Agree
33.	Organize resources (human and materials) for goal attainment furniture	4.12	Agree
34.	Adopt feedback approach in furniture making construction work	4.17	Agree
Self-motivational Skills			
35.	Dream big in furniture making	4.1	Agree
36.	Be innovative in furniture making	4.18	Agree
37.	Inculcate self-discipline in furniture making	4.15	Agree
38.	Create deadlines for production lines in furniture making	4.26	Agree
39.	Set time for break/refreshment in furniture making	4.14	Agree
40.	Connect with positive and motivated people in furniture making	4.11	Agree
41.	Keep learning about furniture making	4.01	Agree
42.	Reward oneself and staff in furniture making	3.97	Agree
Marketing Skills			
43.	State marketing skills in furniture making	4.19	Agree
44.	Conduct market survey in furniture making	4.06	Agree
45.	Advertise through all possible media product of furniture making	4.08	Agree
46.	Organize/participate in trade fare exhibition for furniture items	4.13	Agree
47.	Keep records/inventories of products of furniture	4.16	Agree
48.	Develop effective distribution network for furniture making	4.05	Agree

The results of data analysis presented in Table 2 reveals that the forty-eight statement contents appropriate for inclusion in entrepreneurship skills in furniture making were found suitable. The mean values ranged from 3.91 to 4.34.

Research Question 3

What are the facilities needed for training in entrepreneurship skills in furniture making? The data for answering research question 3 are presented in table 3

Table 3: Resp. views on the Facilities Needed for Training in Entrep Skills in Furniture Making

S/N	Content appropriate (Technical skills)	X	Remarks
1.	Computer	4.31	Agree
2.	Machine power tools	4.38	Agree
3.	Portable power hand tools	4.27	Agree
4.	Compressor	4.20	Agree
5.	Spray gun	4.16	Agree
6.	Holding and supporting tools such as: bench vice, brace	4.17	Agree
7.	Geometrical tools such as: pencil, knife, rule, try square	4.35	Agree
8.	Cutting and abrading tool such as: plane, chisels, saw	4.31	Agree
9.	Percussion and impelling tools such as: screwdriver, hammer	4.35	Agree
10.	Timber/wood such as: mahogany, afara, abura, cedar	4.21	Agree
11.	Manufacture boards such as: plywood, particle board, chipboard, hardboard, lamin board	4.24	Agree
12.	Adhesive such as: PVA glue, synthetic glue, contact glue	4.21	Agree
13.	Fittings and fasteners	4.24	Agree
14.	Finishes such as; sanding sealer, gloss lacquer, thinner	4.16	Agree

The results of data analysis presented in Table 3 reveal that all the 14 items of facilities were found to be needed for training in entrepreneurship skills in furniture making for the improvement of craftsmen. The mean values of the items ranged from 4.16 to 4.38.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of the study are discussed based on the research questions analyzed and answered. On the objectives found to be suitable for entrepreneurship skills in furniture making, the study found that the three objectives were suitable for entrepreneurship skills in furniture making. These objectives are: identify content components of entrepreneurship skills, conceptualize craftsmen entrepreneurship skills, identify appropriate business opportunities in furniture making, identify appropriate facilities needed for entrepreneurship skill, determine compelling industries in furniture making, and develop a business plan in furniture making. The three objective statements were agreed upon by the respondents to be suitable for entrepreneurship skills in furniture making.

The study also found that three clusters of entrepreneurship skill areas with their Forty eight corresponding skill statements were appropriate as content for inclusion in entrepreneurship skills in furniture making. These three cluster areas include technical skills for training in furniture making, business planning skills, financial management skills.

On facilities needed for training in entrepreneurship skills in furniture making, the study identified fourteen facilities needed for training in entrepreneurship skills in furniture making. These facilities are shown in Table 3. The identified facilities are said to be needed for training in entrepreneurship skills in furniture making.

6. CONCLUSION

The study sought to develop entrepreneurship skills in furniture making of technical college graduates in Kogi state, Nigeria. The study observed deficiencies of entrepreneurship skills in furniture making. The study therefore, proposed three clusters of content components appropriate for inclusion in entrepreneurship skills in furniture making as: technical skills, business plan skills, financial management skills, managerial skills, self-motivational skills, and marketing skills. Also, 14 facilities needed for teaching and learning activities are required for training technical college graduates/trainees in furniture making in Kogi state, Nigeria. Invariably, this will improve technical college graduates in designing, construction activities, financial management practices, showcasing and marketing strategies. Hence, generating sustainable economic, industrial growth, employment opportunities and generation, and poverty eradication in Kogi state are imperative.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Kogi state Science, Technical and Technology Education Board (STTEB) through the state government should integrate the identified skills in entrepreneurship in furniture making curriculum of technical colleges. When graduates of technical colleges possess the rightful skills, then self-employment would be meaningful, thus enhancing economic stability of individuals and the country.
2. Federal and State Governments should as a matter of urgency give more attention to technical and vocation education by provisions of quality, functional and modern computers, up to date machine facilities and equipment, power tools, hand tools and consumable materials to technical colleges and vocational training centers, particularly, for woodworking trades.
3. State government and relevant agencies responsible for curriculum development should collaborate on packaging these identified entrepreneurship skills into the existing program for the purpose of entrepreneurship skills development of technical college graduates in furniture making.
4. Government and technical college administrators should as a matter of urgency organize seminars and workshops on entrepreneurship skills training for furniture making instructors to enable them start implementing quickly, the training of students for self-employment after graduation in Kogi state.

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