



RESEARCH ARTICLE

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EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILL ACQUISITION AMONG HEARING IMPAIRED SCHOOL LEAVERS IN SOUTH-EAST AND SOUTHSOUTH ZONE OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the strategies for sustaining livelihood among hearing impaired school leavers in southeast-south south geo-political zone. To achieve the objective of the study two research questions and hypotheses were formulated. The researcher's constructed 15 items statement instrument named "Relationship of Selected Empowerment Strategies and Sustaining Livelihood of Persons with Hearing Impaired School Leavers (Rsesslpwhisl)" The instrument was faced and content validated by experts in measurement and evaluation, special education and guidance and counseling. The corrections and inputs of the foregoing experts improved the status of the instrument a great deal. The sample of the study was 47 hearing impaired school leavers. The data collected were statistically analyses using Pearson product moment correlation analysis at 0.5 level of significant. The result showed that there exist positive significance relationship between financial support and entrepreneurship training and sustaining livelihood among persons with hearing impairment. Based on the finding of the study, conclusion was drawn that creating individual empowerment strategies through entrepreneurship training and financial assistance would enhance sustaining means of livelihood among individuals with hearing impairment and would in turn render positive impact not only in their live but also on the economy of the immediate society and the nations at large where everybody contributes his /her quota disability status notwithstanding. Recommendation were made which include Government, NGO, communities, and volunteers renewed aspiration of having skilled person s in various vocational or entrepreneur skill centre in Local Government Areas and states opened specifically for persons with hearing impairment.

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INTRODUCTION

Professionals in the fields of rehabilitation of persons living with disabilities and experts in special needs education beliefs that efforts should be made to provide services for this marginalize group of individuals through adequate rehabilitation, education and vocational training for self-reliance. But this experts are quick to note that four basic problems militate against effective and functional self-reliance after rehabilitation and empowerment. According to this experts; poverty, frustration, isolation and dependency remains very serious issues disable population must grapple with to improve on their living condition (Olayi, 2017). Olayi further opine that any empowerment strategy for person with

disability in general and the blind and deaf in particular must pay attention to these problems and tackle them headlong first in the society then the disable individual. A large minority struggling with difficulties in gaining control of their life and claiming their right is the group of people with disabilities. More often, it is due to stigmatization and prejudice, and factors from institutions, organization and society that do not enable people with disabilities to take responsibility for their own life Jacob (2016) opine that empowerment is delivering strength to someone that is strengthens, to enable him realize his potential for self-reliance. Empowerment is building hope for an individual to benefit on the economic and social dividend. It is an effort to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. It gives succor to the marginalized group the special needs in the society who are seen as parasite that depends on the good-will of a few privileged members of the society. Empowerment is liberation of the oppressed from the shackles of oppressors that had milked them and subject them to a non-

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recognized group called the vulnerable and the marginalized. Arogundade & Adaebisi, (2011) notes that improving empowerment is a very important goal in the rehabilitation of person with hearing impairment as it provides them with the tools they need to attain independence and self-determination. Thus, empowerment has become a contemporary concern in disability field and social model of disability. Kiran & Bimpu (2015) states that in Nigeria, it is estimated that a large percentage of people are having some form of disability probably due to poverty, malnutrition, inadequate healthcare and, violent conflicts. Many nations in the world have accepted the convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities 2006 which aims to change the view of people with disabilities as 'object' of charity, towards the view of people with disabilities as 'subjects' who are capable of claiming their own rights and making their own decisions. Research and experience have shown that even though Nigeria signed this convention, still many with disabilities particularly those with hearing impairment in Nigeria experience discrimination and live-sub-standard life. Braithwait and Daniel (2009) assert that persons with hearing impairment are those with different hearing disorders that significantly interfere with functioning in the home, workplace, social, community and general independent living. This may include hearing disorders, hard of hearing and deafness low hearing.

Ouar & Eret (2009) states that persons with hearing impairment are among the most economically disadvantaged in any tribe in Nigeria. Most person with hearing impairment in Nigeria continually face barriers to their participation in society and are often marginalized. They are often afforded little or no opportunities to express themselves and to contribute to their development or that of their families, communities and nation against the mandate in the National Policy on Education. In view of Eke (2000) persons with hearing impairment have not been given adequate attention in various national programmed that aim at promoting and enhancing the autonomy and employability skills of Nigeria youths through entrepreneurship training. Consequently, they have to depend on family members, well-wishers and charity groups for assistance to sustain themselves as they have no source of income for their livelihood. Their situation is pathetic because the opportunities for them to emerge from poverty are limited, in this case lack of enabling legislation to promote their access to skills development and employment opportunities or by weak implementation and enforcement measures, where such legislation is in place. Historically, disabled people have been treated as being dependent and in need have care, rather than being recognized as full citizens. A new approach to supporting persons with hearing impairment is now needed, which is focused on the promotion of independent living.

The Disability Rights Commission (2010) has defined independent living as referring "to all disabled people having the same means of earning a living as at work, healthcare centers and as members of the Community. As noted by UNESCO (1995), it is high time that the "powerless" because "liberated" and given the opportunities to gain experience and confidence needed to influence the decisions that affect their own daily lives; to discover and choose the path to their independent living take control of their lives and make their contribution towards the development of their communities. This can only be achieved through empowerment. Hullender (2001) argues that empowerment is a process through which

persons with hearing impairment can develop the skills to take control of all aspects of their lives and their environment and includes confidence building, insight and the development of personal skills. It therefore involves providing people with resources, opportunities, knowledge and skills needed to increase their capacity to determine their own future and fully participate in community life. Furthermore, Ina-Abasi (2012), asserted that credit facilities of all forms provided by the government and its agents, non-governmental organization and other public spirited individuals are essential to widen the horizon of persons with hearing impairment develop appropriate skills required in business ventures. These services are mediated by the banking industry. The provision of financial support would go a long way to improving their economic status thereby alleviating poverty among these individuals, facilitate their establishment of small and medium scale business enterprises, promote the accumulation of small saving for enterprises purposes, increase savings to raise funds for the acquisition of assistive technology devices leading to optimal living and enhancing economic productivity for sustainable livelihood in the society.

According to observation in this study area hearing impaired students association (personal communication, 10th Dec.2014), persons with hearing impairment constitutes a large percentage of the population of which 95% have no means of making ends meet. Consequently, the Association asserts that persons with hearing impairment are wallowing in poverty due to lack of access to empowerment services, making them not only dependent but burdens to their families and communities. In bid to overcome poverty among Nigerian citizenry, the federal government has initiated different policies and structural programmed between 1977 till date. These programmed includes; operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Structural Adjustment Programmed (SAP), the Green Revolution, Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructural (DFRRRI), Better Life Programmed (BLP), National Directorate of Empowerment (NDE) Family Support Programmed (FSP), Family Social Welfare Service Scheme (SOWESS), National Poverty Eradication Programmed (NAPEP), The Peoples' Bank of Nigeria (PBN) Community Bank (CB) Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programmed (SURE-P) National Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (NNEDS) and Nigeria with Disabilities Decree of 1993 among others. Their aims are to reduce the sufferings of the people by empowering them with opportunities and access to credit facilities as means of sustainable livelihood. Though many efforts have been put in place to help sustaining means of livelihood of Nigerians by Government but these policies /programmed are prone to individuals with intact hearing, while those with hearing impairment are given shallow treatment to such services. These study was conceived against the existing practice see to it that pragmatic step be taken to reposition the lives of persons with disabilities in general and those with hearing impairment in particular by adopting the following strategies: financial support and entrepreneurship training for sustainable livelihood. The study further investigate whether empowerment has any correlation with sustaining livelihood of persons with hearing impairment particularly in southeast and south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem: Despite decades of development efforts, both the gap between persons without disabilities and those with hearing impairment have widened in southeast and

south-south geo political zone. Unemployment, entrepreneurship training, inequality and poverty reduction are the big challenges facing persons with hearing impairment in the zone. In a study conducted by Jacob, (2016). It was revealed that there are many persons with hearing impairment roaming about the streets, begging for food and money to earn a living, thereby creating a picture of demeaning humanity. Persons with hearing impairment are disproportionately over-represented among the poor, and illiterate creates disabling living condition with increased vulnerability and exclusion. The need to address poverty and dependency issues provides a compelling rationale for seeking strategies of promoting the economic empowerment of persons with hearing impairment. Poverty leads to dependency, unemployment. Low status, self-depreciation, lack of self-advocacy, among this population, empowering this population through entrepreneurship training and financial support will decisively enhance sustainable livelihood. It is in response to this that the researchers are keen on investigating the relationship between empowerment and sustaining livelihood among persons with hearing impairment. The issue is what relationship exists between empowerment through entrepreneurship training, and financial assistance and sustaining livelihood among persons with hearing impairment?

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to investigate selected empowerment strategies and sustaining livelihood among hearing impaired school leavers in southeast and south-south geo political zone of Nigeria. Specifically, the study is aimed at determining the extent to which:

- Entrepreneurship training correlates with sustaining livelihood among persons with hearing impairment.
- Provision of financial support correlates with sustaining livelihood among persons with hearing impairment.

Research questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study.

- What is the relationship between entrepreneurship training and sustaining livelihood among hearing impaired school leavers?
- What is the relationship between provision of financial support and sustaining livelihood among hearing impaired school leavers?

Research Hypotheses: The following hypotheses were formulated to test the study,

- There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship training and sustaining livelihood among hearing impaired school leavers
- There is no significant relationship between provision of financial support and sustaining livelihood among hearing impaired school leavers.

METHODOLOGY

The study used correlation survey design with the focus of investigating the relationship of entrepreneurship training, financial support and strategies for sustaining livelihood among hearing impaired school leavers in southeast and south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria. Population considered for the study was 47 school leavers selected from

across the 11 states under study hence censusing of 47 school leavers within the study area was conducted only for this purpose for person with hearing impairment. Questionnaire was the mean instrument employed to gather data for this study it was name "Relationship of selected empowerment strategies and sustaining livelihood among hearing impaired school leavers"(RSESASAHISL). This instrument was validated to ascertain at first and contend value by experts in the statistic and research. The questionnaire was administer with the help of a research assistance for each of the state, their duty and responsibility was to interpret to the respondents in area of difficulties as contend in the instrument as well as the retrieval of the instrument. All instrument retrieved by research assistance were mail by surface express for central collation. The data collected were statistically analyzed using Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis at 0.05 levels of significance.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship training and sustaining livelihood among hearing impaired school leave. Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between entrepreneurship and sustaining livelihood among persons hearing impaired school leavers (N = 47)

The table 1 above, shows that entrepreneurship training with a mean of 10.53 and SD of 3.36 and sustaining livelihood among hearing impaired school leavers having mean of 11.81 and SD of 4.56 and sig. of 0.006 produced an $r=0.314$ at df of 45. This shows that entrepreneurship training is positively correlated with sustaining livelihood among hearing impaired school leavers. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This shows that entrepreneurship training is significantly related to sustaining livelihood among hearing impaired school leavers.

Hypothesis II: There is no significant relationship between provision of financial support and sustaining livelihood among hearing impaired school leavers. Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between provision of financial support and sustaining livelihood among hearing impaired school leavers (N=47). The table 2 above shows that provision of financial support sustaining livelihood among hearing impaired school leavers with a mean of 12.21 and SD of 4.61 and sustaining livelihood among with a mean of 11.81 and SD of 4.56 is significant at $P>.05$ from a correlation coefficient of $r=0.800$ at df of 45. This shows that provision of financial support has a strong positive correlation with sustaining livelihood among hearing impaired school leavers.

DISCUSSION

The result of statistical analysis of hypothesis one of the study has revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between entrepreneurship training and sustaining livelihood among hearing impaired school leavers. The result also shows that hearing impaired school leavers will have a means of sustainable livelihood when they are trained in lucrative vocational skills that help them earn a living. The findings of this study are in line with Jacob, (2016) in which in his study agreed that entrepreneurship training is a form of training

Table 1.

Variable	Mean	SD	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	Sig	R
Entrepreneurship training	10.53	3.56	834.67			
Sustaining livelihood among hearing impaired school leavers	11.81	4.56	1539.39	356.48	0.006	0.314

Table 2.

Variable	Mean	SD	$\sum X^2$	$\sum y^2$	$\sum Xy$	sig	R
Provision of financial support	12.21	4.61	1570.59				
Sustaining livelihood among hearing impaired school leavers	11.81	4.56	1539.39		1243.99	0.0000	0.800

which make hearing impaired school leavers to be responsive to their personal, families and national needs and aspirations thereby promoting self advocacy and sustainable livelihood among them. The writer emphasized that entrepreneurship competencies carry with it, the concept of skills and mental awareness which are needed to understand the functioning of an already existing business. Entrepreneurship training is about developing attitude, behavior and capacity at the individual level of to improve empowerment of persons with hearing impairment who limited access to privileges of any citizen. It is also about the application of those skill and attitudes that can take many forms during an Individual's career, creating a range of long-term benefits to society and the economy. Similarly, Quar and Eret (2009) supported that the incidence of poverty among persons with hearing impaired in Nigeria is on the high side where about 9.8% of the total population has been classified as poor. This ill situation may be seen as a direct consequence of death of quality entrepreneurship training. Because the quality and effectiveness of entrepreneurship training given to persons with disabilities is measured based on their poverty level. The result of hypothesis two revealed that financial support has a positive significant relationship with sustainable livelihood among hearing impaired school leavers. In agreement with Uraul and Raul (2007) opine that disability may lead to the lower income for the individual and the household and may result in worsening of the living standard and eventually poverty, if the household cannot compensate for the lost income and has to adjust its expenditures accordingly. On the other hand, disability may also lead to additional expenditures- for the individual and the household with disabilities, in particular in relation to specific services (healthcare, transportation, assistive devices, personal assistance, and environmental adaptation).

The increase spending will vary depending on the availability and financial accessibility of such services. If such services are not available or are not affordable by the hearing impaired school leavers, the result is dependence and poor quality of life. Bugh (2000) added that the main objective of the financial support is to assist hearing impaired school leavers in procuring durable, sophisticated and scientifically manufactured, modern, standard aids and appliances that can promote their physical, social and psychological rehabilitation, by reducing the effects of disabilities and enhance their economic potential as well as sustaining livelihood. Financial services are products, facilities and services including savings, credit, insurance, transfer, payment services, leasing, and such which are provided by banks, credit union and financial institutions, government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study conclusion was drawn as follows:

Entrepreneurship training is critically relevant to sustaining livelihood of hearing impaired school leavers. This training provide them with the skills that sale them to the world and increase their relevance, self-reliance and positive contribution the self, community and the society. Moreover, one thing is to have good business plan/idea, and another thing to have the capital to start or implement the lofty business ideas. Due to the natural tendency of persons with hearing impairment to be poor, it pertinent that individuals and money institution provide these persons with capital to start business based on the assessed needs of the person.

Recommendation

From the findings and conclusion reached in the study, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- Government, NGOs, communities and volunteer should make sure that there are skilled personnel in various vocational or entrepreneurial skills centers in the States and beyond to be opened for the enrolment of hearing impaired school leavers to learn various entrepreneurial skills of interest.
- Government and NGOs should be in business of supporting hearing impaired school leavers in lofty business ideas.
- Curriculum designers should make entrepreneurship education a core subject even at basic education level to inculcate the culture of the self-reliance on hearing impaired school leavers.
- Government should make sign language a compulsory subject in basic and secondary schools to enhance effective interaction and communication between hearing impaired and intact hearing in the society.

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