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## LIFE LONG LEARNING (LLL) THROUGH APPRENTICESHIP AND SKILL TRAINING AMONG YOUTHS IN UDENU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ENUGU STATE.

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### Abstract

*The general purpose of the study was to assess lifelong learning through apprenticeship and skills training among youths in Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions and one null hypothesis. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 9068 youths of Udenu Local Government Area in Enugu state. 10% size of the population was sampled and used for the study which gave a sample size of 898 youths comprising of 494 and 404 of male and female youths respectively. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviations for the research questions while t-test statistics was used for the null hypothesis. Results obtained revealed that the skills required by youths include tailoring, carpentry hair dressing among others. The study also observed the benefits of lifelong learning to include income generation, self confidence among others. Recommendation made included among others that Government should give priority attention to lifelong learning by establishing apprenticeship and skill training as a compulsory course in primary, secondary and tertiary institution's curriculum with well equipped building for this is the only imperative to curb unemployment and to improve lifelong learning and as well promote national development.*

**Key Word:** *lifelong learning, apprenticeship, skills and youth.*

### Introduction

Lifelong learning is about acquiring and updating all kinds of abilities, interests, knowledge and qualifications from the pre-school years to post retirement which promotes the development of knowledge and competences that will enable adaptation to the knowledge-based society and also valuing all forms of learning. Ebirim and Mbaji (2012) noted that lifelong learning is a gradual and continuous process of acquiring knowledge, skills competencies and attitudes that enable individuals to live, develop and function effectively and efficiently within the society

throughout life. Learning can no longer be dichotomized into a place and time to acquire knowledge (school) and a place and time to apply knowledge (the workplace). Lifelong learning is an essential challenge for inventing the future of our societies; it is a necessity rather than a possibility or a luxury to be considered (Jackson, 2013). Lifelong learning is more than adult education and/or training, it is a mindset and a habit for people to acquire. It therefore implies that active youths requires the possession of relevant professional skills and knowledge needed to combat emerging complex problems and challenges facing humanity in the 21st century. However,

acquisition of these unique skills and knowledge calls for lifelong learning on the part of the youths.

Lifelong learning according to Aitcheson in Ptbindingsforsch (2014) is a comprehensive and visionary concept which includes formal and nonformal learning extended throughout the life span of an individual to attain the fullest development in personal, social, vocational and professional life. Zuala (2012) submitted that among the objectives of lifelong learning includes active citizenship, employability, social inclusion and personal fulfillment. In other words, lifelong learning stimulates and encourages individuals to acquire skills, knowledge and values that they will require throughout their life time and to apply them creatively in any environment with confidence in all roles. Nordstrom, (2006) articulated a number of benefits attached to lifelong learning to include: improve selfconfidence, fight boredom, generate income for oneself, keep brain healthy and mind sharp, learn practical life skills, model positive behavior for your children, learn for leisure, sleep more soundly and stay healthy.

In the emerging knowledge society, an educated youth will be someone who is willing to consider learning as a lifelong process. Illich (1971) in his own opinion noted that more and more knowledge, especially advanced

knowledge, is acquired well past the age of formal schooling, and in many situations through educational processes that do not center on the traditional school. Lifelong learning needs to promote effective educational opportunities in the many learning settings through which people pass, including home, school, work, and the larger political

Ogbonnaya, K. A., Okoye, O. E. & Nwobi, A. U. community. Similarly, Fischer (2000) noted that a lifelong learning approach permits integration of the best features of school, community, home, and workplace learning. The implication is that learning takes place not only at all ages and in virtually all professions; increasingly, it takes place among heterogeneous groups of people in families, clubs, and virtual communities.

Apprenticeship is the process of learning/skill acquisition through enlistment with a master craftsman. It is a method of developing craftsman. Ryan and Unwin (2001) describe apprenticeship as a structured programme of vocational preparation, sponsored by an employer, juxtaposing part-time education with on-the-job training and work experience, leading to a recognized vocational qualification at craft or higher level, and taking at least two years to complete, after requisite general education. In Nigeria, for instance, before the colonial administration, Omole (1999) noted that the principal form of education for going into any occupation or profession was through the apprenticeship system whereby a young person was apprenticed to a master craftsman who taught him the skill of a vocation and after many years of learning, he was allowed to start his own workshop or business. In the traditional apprenticeship system, there is usually no established curriculum or formal procedure for the acquisition of skill. The apprentice only

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learns through observation, imitation and trial and error method. The apprentice learns on the job by direct instruction and could be punished for making silly mistakes. In support Fafunwa (2004) observed that the apprenticeship system does not encourage questioning or offer of suggestion by the apprentice. The master craftsman teaches and establishes his authority

on learning and the learner in an autocratic manner. Also there are no standard regulations guiding the process, except what the master craftsman sets.

Apprenticeship is a common trend in the world in which youths and adolescent are empower in the country, the world changing realities of globalization, competitiveness and knowledge based economy, strongly underscore the importance of training and skills acquisition among youths (ILO, 2012). Specifically, apprenticeship as a veritable vehicle which is one of the major functional aspect of lifelong learning is perquisites for employment generation and poverty reduction at low investment cost as well as improving the wellbeing of the individuals which has not been adequately harnessed in tackling the unemployment surge among youths in Nigeria. As such, reasonable attention which should have been focus on skill training programmes especially on apprenticeship to activate the role of youths in development have been conspicuously neglected. Such skill acquisitions training within the confines of apprenticeship will have affords youths a means to be relevant along the line of a particular profession.

Youths are viewed as persons whose mental and physical abilities in the society can transform the society for good. These male and female youths if religiously articulated through training on skills acquisition, will improve the living standard that will promote extensive development in the country (Chukwu, 2004). Youths are the active workforce that should not be neglected in educational policy hence in acquiring lifelong learning. Skills training are no doubt the most important method of skills transfer in the country's informal economy. This is because they offer a more cost effective

Ogbonnaya, K. A., Okoye, O. E. & Nwobi, A. U. and flexible means of skills transfer that absorbs a larger number of youths in Nigeria than their formal and publicly financed counterparts. Our world today is on a fast lane towards lifelong learning of which apprenticeship and skill acquisition training like computer operations, catering and hotel management, fashion designing, cosmetology, barbing, hat and bead making, soap making, shoe making, hair dressing, fashion designing and decoration, tailoring, repair of GSM handset, wrist watches, air conditioners, vulcanizing, tie and dye etc. is an integral and very important part of it (Salami, 2013). No wonder Henry Ford said, and I quote, —trained men are better than experienced men||. But the reality staring us today is that only those with skills would stand the test of time in a country such as Nigeria highly susceptible to economic unpredictability.

Research findings prove that apprenticeship and skill training operates within a wider context of cultural traditions and aspirations of the individuals and the complexity of the labour market regulations (Steedman, 2012). In support of the above, Atuwokiki (2013) revealed that youths engage in apprentice training in Nigeria as a means of skills development and employment. It is very important to involve our youths in lifelong learning through skill training programmes because skill based education improves functional and analytical ability and thereby opens up opportunities for individuals and also groups to achieve greater access to labour markets and livelihoods. It is true that our young generation needs to be skilled in order to get employment. It is very much important to get skills and only then we can think of a bright future of a country. Thus most youths in Udenu LGA and Nigeria as a whole did not see apprenticeship and skill training as a pathway

towards career prospect rather than in academic training in the university or higher institution. These situations pose great challenges to the very existence of youths in most developing nations especially in Udenu Community which constitute the labour force and also struggling with the challenge of acquiring employability skill so as to function effectively in the society in which they live in. Against this background, the study was to assess apprenticeship and skill training programmes on ground for the youths in Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State.

### **Statement of the problem**

The success of lifelong learning depends among others on apprenticeship and skill training programmes. Different efforts have been made by federal government and non-governmental organizations for skill training programmes for the youths. Today unemployment has become an air born disease whose extent of disaster can no longer be measured. The number of work force in Nigeria is consciously growing in geometric progression. Every year Nigerian Universities chums out thousands of graduates whereas the rate of employment generation is less than arithmetic progression. According to Adekola (2013) one major problem of apprenticeship system is that, it is generally believed to be meant for people who cannot do well in the formal education system or those whose parents cannot afford to sponsor their education. This particular problem makes it difficult to attract young graduates and youths of school age into the system. It is assumed that people undergoing apprenticeship are ‘never do well’ people and they are not given deserved respect like their counterparts in the formal school system.

Ogbonnaya, K. A., Okoye, O. E. & Nwobi, A. U. In other words, youths do not participate effectively in lifelong learning and skill training the way they ought to in the study area. Hence, there is need to establish some of the skill training programmes available to them. This is because to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, the available evidence showed that there are enough skill training programmes on ground for the youths. It does not require much thinking for one to realize that lifelong learning through apprenticeship and skill training acquisition is what we need to reduce the high rate of unemployment especially among our youths. Hence this study is restricted to assess the impact of lifelong learning through apprenticeship and skill training youths in Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State.

### **Purpose of the study**

The general purpose of the study was to assess lifelong learning through apprenticeship and skills training among youths in Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

1. identify the skills training programmes required by the youths of Udenu LGA of Enugu State.
2. ascertain the benefits of lifelong learning among the youths of Udenu LGA of Enugu State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. what are the skills training programmes required by the youths of Udenu LGA of Enugu State.
2. what are the benefits of lifelong learning among the youths of Udenu LGA of Enugu State.

### **Hypothesis**

The hypothesis is generated and tested at 0.05 level of significance for the study.

HO1: There is no significant difference between male and female youths on the benefits of lifelong learning (LLL) in Udenu LGA.

## Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted in this study. According to Nworgu (2015) a descriptive survey design is one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group.

## Population

The population for the study comprised all the youths in Udenu LGA of Enugu state. Available data showed that they were nine thousand and sixty eight youths comprising of 494 male and 404 female youths in Udenu LGA. (Udenu Nation Population Projection, 2017).

Based on the large population size (9068) of the youths in Udenu LGA, the researchers sampled the population element from each of the strata so as to ensure a manageable size. A sample proportion of 10 percent of the population was used to determine the sample size of the study. Therefore the sample for the study is 898 youths which include 494 males and 404 females. The choice of 10percent is based on the premises that if the population is a few thousands a sampling interval of 10 percent will do (Nwagu, 2005).

The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire titled Life Long Learning (LLL) Through Apprenticeship and

Ogbonnaya, K. A., Okoye, O. E. & Nwobi, A. U. Skills Training Questionnaire (LLTASTQ). The questionnaire was organized in two parts. Parts A sought to collect personal data of the respondents while part B was arranged in two clusters A and B which represented the two research questions that guided the study. Cluster A has 8 Items which addressed research question one and Cluster B has 8 items that addressed research question two. The instrument was made up of 16 items. A four point rating scale was provided for the respondents to make their responses as follows:

Strongly Agree	-	SA (4points)
Agree	-	A (3 points)
Disagree	-	D (2 points)
Strongly Disagree	-	SD (1point)

The researchers used two field assistants for distributing the questionnaire to the respondents. The research assistants were briefed and trained on the method and modalities for administering the questionnaire to the respondents. A total of 898 copies of the questionnaire was printed and distributed.

The researchers used mean scores and t-test statistics. A mean score of 2.5 and above was adopted as benchmark for acceptance point while any mean below 2.5 will not be accepted. While t-test statistics was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

The results of the study are presented according to the research questions and hypothesis of the study.

## Research Question One

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What are the training skills programmes

**Table 1: Mean Ratings of Male and Female youths on the training skills programmes required by the youths**

S/N	Questionnaire Items related to content of entrepreneurship education	Male Youths			Female Youths		
		X	SD	Decision	X	SD	Decision
1	Tailoring	2.76	1.01	A	2.97	1.01	A
2	Carpentry	2.90	0.99	A	2.69	0.93	A
3	Hair Dressing	3.23	1.04	A	3.12	1.11	A
4	Barbing	2.98	1.02	A	2.96	0.98	A
5	Laundry services	2.78	0.92	A	2.87	0.87	A
6	Decoration	2.91	0.91	A	2.68	0.92	A
7	Auto mechanic	2.56	0.88	A	2.78	0.98	A
8	Hat and bead marking	2.84	0.92	A	3.05	1.02	A

required among the youths of Udenu LGA of Enugu state?

Table 1 presents the mean ratings of male and female youths of Udenu on the skills training programmes required by the youths

The eight items are rated above the cut off point of 2.50 on the four point rating scale. Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 have corresponding mean scores of 2.76, 2.90, 3.23, 2.98, 2.78, 2.91, 2.56 and 2.84 with standard deviations of 1.01, 0.99, 1.04, 1.02, 0.92,

0.91, 0.88 and 0.92 respectively by the male youths.

0.98 and 1.02 respectively by the female youths.

## Research Question Two

What are the benefits of Life Long Learning among the youths of Udenu LGA of Enugu state?

These same items are rated 2.97, 2.69, 3.12, 2.96,

2.87, 2.68, 2.78 and 3.05 with standard deviations of 1.01, 0.93, 1.11, 0.98, 0.87, 0.92,

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**Table 2: Mean Ratings of Male and Female youths on the benefits of Life Long Learning.**

S/N	Questionnaire Items related to benefits of life long learning	Male Youths			Female Youths		
		X	SD	Decision	X	SD	Decision
9	Improve self confidence	2.66	1.1	A	2.67	1.02	A
10	Learn practical life skills	2.91	0.89	A	2.61	0.98	A
11	Learn for leisure	2.73	1.02	A	2.99	1.01	A
12	Fight boredom	2.90	1.06	A	2.87	0.88	A
13	Keeping brain healthy	2.61	0.89	A	2.91	0.89	A
14	Model positive behaviour	2.94	0.92	A	2.69	0.86	A
15	To stay healthy	2.59	0.87	A	2.88	0.99	A
16	To generate income	2.81	0.91	A	3.15	1.03	A

**Table 3: t-test Analyses of male and female youths on the benefits of Life Long Learning (LLL).**

Group	N	X	SD	t-cal	t-critical value	Level of sign	DF	Remark
Male Youths	494	3.1	1.04	1.17	1.96	0.05	896	Accepted
Female Youths	404	3.41						
<b>Total</b>	<b>898</b>							

Table 2 presents the mean ratings of male and female youths of Udenu on the benefits of Life Long Learning (LLL) among the youths of Udenu LGA

**Hypothesis one:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female youths on the benefits of Life Long Learning (LLL).

The eight items are rated above the cut off point of 2.50 on the four point rating scale.

Items 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 have corresponding mean scores of 2.66, 2.91, 2.73, 2.90, 2.61, 2.94, 2.59 and

2.81 with standard deviations of 1.1, 0.89, 1.02, 1.06,

0.89, 0.92, 0.87 and 0.91 respectively by the male youths. These same items are rated 2.67, 2.61, 2.99, 2.87, 2.91, 2.69, 2.88 and 3.15 with standard deviations of 1.02, 0.98, 1.01, 0.88, 0.89, 0.86, 0.99 and 1.03 respectively by the female youths.



Table 3: presents the t-test analysis of the difference between the mean ratings of young and elderly women on the content of entrepreneurship education. The t- calculated value is 1.17 at 896 degree of freedom (df) and 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated value of 1.17 is less than the table value of 1.96, the null hypothesis of this study is accepted. It can therefore be concluded that there is no significant difference in mean ratings of male and female youths on the benefits of Life Long Learning.

## Discussion

It was the opinion of the (youths) respondents that the skills required by them include tailoring, carpentry, hair dressing, barbing, laundry services, decoration, auto mechanic among others. This is in line with the view of Chukwu (2004) who observed that persons with good mental and physical abilities in the society can transform the society for good. These male and female youths if religiously articulated through training on skills acquisition, will improve the living standard that will promote extensive development in the country. Youths are the active workforce that should not be neglected in educational policy hence in acquiring lifelong learning. He also observed that skills training are no doubt the most important method of skills transfer in the country's informal economy. Eze and Ekemezie (2014) supporting this view observed that this will help them to meet with the challenges of equipping them with the basic and needed skills required for self reliant that translates to sustainable development. Motre so, Ryan and Unwin (2001) describe apprenticeship as a structured programme of vocational preparation, sponsored by an employer, juxtaposing part-time education with on-the-job training and work experience, leading to a recognized vocational qualification at craft or higher level, and taking at least two years to complete, after requisite general education. Therefore, youths need lifelong learning through apprenticeship for self reliant and improve the standard of their skills and this will on the other way improve them and their wellbeing in order to live a fulfilled and responsible life in their society.

It was also agreed by the youths (respondents) that the benefits of generating income, model positive behavior, improve self confidence, keeping brain healthy among others. This is in line with the submission of Nordstrom, (2006) who articulated a number of benefits attached to lifelong learning to include: improve self-confidence, fight boredom, generate income for oneself, keep brain healthy and mind sharp, learn practical life skills, model positive behavior for your children, learn for leisure, sleep more soundly and stay healthy. In support of the above, Atuwokiki (2013) revealed that youths engage in apprentice training in Nigeria as a means of skills development and employment. Therefore, It is very important to involve our youths in lifelong learning through skill training programmes because skill based education improves functional and analytical ability and thereby opens up opportunities for individuals and also groups to achieve greater access to labour markets and livelihoods. Zuala (2012) submitted that among the objectives of lifelong learning includes active citizenship, employability, social inclusion and personal fulfillment. In other words, lifelong learning stimulates and encourages individuals to acquire skills, knowledge and values that they will require throughout their life time and to apply them creatively in any environment with confidence in all roles.

## Conclusion

Lifelong learning is about acquiring and updating all kinds of abilities, interest knowledge and qualifications from preschool years to post retirement which promotes the development of knowledge and competencies that will enable adaptation to the knowledge based society and also valuing all forms of learning.

Apprenticeship is a common trend in the world in which youths and adolescent are empowered in the world changing realities of globalization of competitiveness and knowledge based economy, strongly underscore the importance of training and skills acquisition among youths.

Youths are the active work force that should not be neglected in the society. Therefore, when youths are religiously articulated through training skills acquisition will improve the living standard that will promote extensive development of any country or society.

## Recommendations

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

1. Local leaders in the community should organize massive enlightenment campaigns and educate the youths on the relevance of lifelong learning to both individuals and the society at large.
2. Tertiary institutions should introduce a compulsory short internship programme where students will be exposed to work experiences with the desire for lifelong learning.
3. Government should give priority attention to lifelong learning by establishing apprenticeship and skill training as a compulsory course in primary, secondary and tertiary institution's curriculum with well equipped building for this is the only imperative to curb unemployment and promote national development.
4. Government and non-governmental organizations should adequately fund tertiary institutions to ensure that necessary facilities needed for lifelong learning are not lacking in higher institutions.

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