

Self-employment of School-Leavers and Tertiary Institution-Graduates: Upholding Fundamental Human-Rights and Human Dignity

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Abstract: *The paper examined the effects of government retraining programmes on the fundamental human rights of unemployable school leavers and tertiary institution graduates. The protection offered to such fundamental human rights by self employment that is personality trait prone was also examined. Based on the findings of these examinations, it was recommended that formal sector unemployable school leavers and tertiary institution graduates should shun government retraining and retooling programmes and take rather to employment opportunities arising from their peculiar personality traits, or affective domains.*

Keywords: *self employment; school-leavers; tertiary institution-graduates; fundamental human-rights; human dignity.*

I. Introduction

Human rights may be regarded to be those rights and freedoms necessary for liberty and autonomy, physical integrity, survival and development of full human potential (Hausermann, 1996:1). They, according to Hausermann (1996) “include rights to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being; food; housing; health care; privacy or confidentiality; sharing in scientific advancement and its benefits; work; education; participation in political and cultural life; and the freedom to make choices” (p.1) regarding job or employment opportunities.

The rights are inalienable; that is, individuals cannot be arbitrarily denied of them. Equally, they cannot be legitimately overridden by natural laws or practices. This is because they are fundamental, and belong without distinction to every man, woman and child (Hausermann, 1996).

Although they arose as a global movement shortly after the Second World War, their advocacy and implementation have remained ever expressed in the United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenants on Human Rights (1966) (Kirby, 1996). They are listed in the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights protected by international texts. These texts impose specific legal obligations on the states that sign them to guarantee their implementation as named. They also ensure, on moral grounds, states that did not endorse them, as members of the world community, respect them, recognize them, provide legal and social environments in which men, women and children freely and equally enjoy them; and ensure all individuals, groups, and corporations of theirs are aware of their responsibility to respect the rights and dignity of others, by avoiding being harmful to them, but acting in mutual solidarity, compassion and tolerance towards them (Hausermann, 1996).

Be it as it may, understanding the significance of human rights in relation to unemployability of Nigerian tertiary institution graduates and school leavers is the main focus of this paper. This position requires a practical approach and understanding of the principles at stake. This is because the response of many stakeholders and scholars to unemployability of Nigerian tertiary institution graduates and school leavers, from about the Mid-1980’s, has been to call for the following: (i) strict adherence to the University autonomy act; (ii) diversification of funding to include attraction of the private sector and hostel accommodation; (iii) updating and restructuring of the curriculae to meet the demands of the national economy; (iv) main streaming of science and technical education, especially Information – Communication – Technology (ICT) or Information – Education – Communication (IEC); (v) affective monitoring of tertiary institutions and insistence on their adherence to standards; (vi) development of innovative approaches that will ensue continuous re-tooling and retraining of graduates and school leavers; (vii) capacity building of lecturers and teachers to enable them operate at the cutting edge of their disciplines; (viii) increasing movement towards decentralized and competitive wage bargaining systems among tertiary institutions that would promote performance-based reward systems; and (ix) mass mobilization and value reorientation among students to cultivate in them diligence, discipline and selfless service (Babalola, 2007). These, of course, are common responses to graduates’ and school leavers’ unemployment or underemployment.

These measures are, however, often ineffective, counterproductive, and positively harmful in the struggle against graduates’ and school leavers’ unemployability. They are always underlain by a grand strategy:

a set of policies developed by governments of Nigeria to guide the conduct of the unemployable graduates and school leavers. The strategy coordinates and directs all resources towards achievement of the political objective of government. It develops the economic resources necessary to sustain the job elements, foster morale to maintain commitment, regulate the distribution of opportunities between the various job elements, and apply the country's resources in a way that weakens the unemployable graduate's or school leaver's will to do otherwise. Since the grand strategy is a policy tool of the Nigerian government. The decision of the Nigerian government to declare war on graduates' or school leavers' unemployability is always typically an interventionist policy designed to secure an advantage. The minimal objective of the grand strategy is to preserve the unemployable school leaver or tertiary institution graduate within frontiers of their government or state and his political, economic, and social systems (Arikpo, 2012; James, 1985).

This same misfortune is or was suffered by other measures like the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree of 1977; the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion (alteration of List of Schedule Enterprises) Act of 1981; which had 36 different enterprises exclusively reserved for ownership by Nigerians; Section 7 and Subsection 51 and 52 of the Revised National Policy on Education (1981: 32-35) which advocated functional literacy, remedial, continuing, vocational, aesthetic, cultural and civic education for youths and adults to outside the formal school system be components of adult and non-formal education curriculum; the Industrial Training Fund (ITF), saddled with the responsibility of providing financial assistance to vocational improvement centers, and train wayside mechanics, masons, electricians, cabinet makers, plumbers, draughts men, etc. (Ngwu, 2003).

The same situation compound the smooth run of such well known programmes as the village Polytechnics in Kenya; the Botswana Brigades; the Mobile Trades Training Schools in Thailand; the TRYSEM projects in India; the National Industrial Training Programmes in many Latin American countries; Center for Revolutionary Education in Guinea; Center for Applied Education (CRPA) in Zaire; Voluntary Corps for Development in Congo, the Bunumbu project in Sierra Leone, the Rural Schools of UJAMAA Villages in Tanzania, the Foundation schools in the Congo and other such experiments in Kenya, Senegal, Sudan and Uganda (Ngwu, 2003).

It is unlikely that a time ever existed when these measures checked unemployability of school leavers or tertiary institution graduates. Aziegbe (1990) reported those who participated in the said measures as offered and managed by National Directorate of Employment (NDE) to (1) see the process of collecting loans after approval to be too rigorous and encumbered with official bureaucracy; (2) have little or nothing left as their working capital, because of long delays in issuances of supposed loans and rise in prices of tools far more than they had quoted in their feasibility reports; (3) report loans to be just adequate irrespective of galloping inflationary trends; thus same had to discard the original scope of their proposals, while others augmented what they had with loans from parents, friends and elsewhere; (4) report spending their loan on family problems and other things outside their intended business and thereafter return to their pre-NDE programme life situation; (5) allege chief project officers to be lackadaisical and unserious in taking actions on vital issues; (6) complain fabricators to more often than supply second hand and substandard tools and machines which either easily give way or do not work; (7) report the problem of not seeing the supposed management consultants when needed to monitor their operations for professional advice; (8) complain the non-regular visit of monitoring teams of the directorate to beneficiaries' sites; (9) report some of the beneficiaries to see the loans as their own share of the national cake, and so abandon their projects and flee to destinations unknown to the directorate after they have collected the loans; (10) have no traceable address or location in the books of NDE etc (Arikpo, 2012).

Consequently, these measures alienate and stigmatize the unemployable school leaver and tertiary institution graduate whose confidence should be won, if he is to receive information and counselling on unemployment status change; and employment status attainment, or modification essential for employability of school leavers or tertiary institution graduates. It is easy for the laws to be passed, decisions handed down, but much more difficult to change or modify employment status of unemployable school leavers and graduates, especially when the social and legal environments are not conducive.

The most effective unemployment combating policies are those which are participatory and voluntary and respect fundamental human right and freedom. Such policies pitch the employability of the school leaver and tertiary institution graduate on his capability to make rational decisions. So, they advocate not just empowerment and facilitation but initiative or creativity. They also propagate avoidance of stigmatization, degradation and use of inappropriate language or labelling like "unemployed", "retrenched", "out-of-job", "layoffs", "permanent adolescents", "loss of paycheck", "loss of bits of one's self concept", "trauma", "status of dependency", "over eating", "compulsive gambling", "loafing and loitering", "physical aggression and tuggery", "prostitution", "street ganging, bullying and social molestation", "terrorism, night marauding", "highway and armed robbery", "night orgies", "temper outbursts", "persistent depression, drug addiction", "alcoholism", "excessive smoking, etc on the unemployed (Nwachuku, 1994; Awake, 1991).

Such language or labelling denies the individual the right to privacy, which under lack or none availability of formal sector employment avails the individual of right to private or self employment and his own

job or employment orientation. They also indirectly ostracize him from rights to health care; rights to shelter and housing; rights for protection from oppressive laws and policies of state; rights to due process in labour law; rights to employment without discrimination; rights for individuals to have the basic information necessary for their protection, health and life; the right of women to the dignity of their person; and rights of all persons without distinction to protection against various conduct and hate attacks (Kirby, 1996). That could be, or are after effects often guaranteed through quantifiable monies or socially acceptable and meaningful productive inputs that emanate from such self employment.

All these and other rights are assured through private or self than formal or government or organized private sector employment. The explanation involves a paradox. Unless either government, the organized private sector, or non-governmental agencies (NGOs) stop tackling school leavers or graduates unemployment through either of the measures above the fundamental human right of unemployable school leavers and graduates and their employable initia will continue to be abused. And, ofcourse, no other strategy, promises or will promises unemployable graduates and school leavers a chance of employment than a full appreciation of the unemployment/fundamental human rights paradox.

Understanding the global principle of human rights helps put in place strategies for the combat of the unemployment of school leavers and graduates. This remains done in the context of basic universal principles designed to defend and uphold the human dignity of each unemployable school leavers and graduates (Kirby, 1996).

It is well known that school leavers and graduates, who are unemployable, because of economic recessions or down turns have either innate or inborn tendencies or charismata, or both (Castle, 1975; Engstrom, 1983), with which to successfully respond to or tackle, individually, their unemployable situation. These tendencies express themselves in no fixed pattern as urges or drives or talents. They may be weak, or strong in different unemployable school leavers or graduates, and may be expressed differently on different job situations or occasions (Castle, 1975). But charismata, is a special gift from God that is inborn, but is benefit of being born-again, or manifestation of the incarnate Christ and Holy Spirit, who in-dwell a born-again Christian. The gifts are those of prophecy, ministering, teaching, exhorting, giving, ruling, and mercy (as listed in the twelfth chapter of Romans) and the personal characteristics of God the father enumerated in the book of Galatians 5:22-23 as the fruit of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Engstrom, 1983).

The talents and charismata considered above see the fundamental human rights/employability of the unemployable school leaver and graduate to be only assured or protected by a system of inter-dependent traits: attitudes, abilities and temperaments which are considered to be relatively stable after adolescence. The antidote to the affected individuals' unemployability and abuse of human rights is the discovery and pursuit of vocational and avocational activities which are in congruence with their traits. Individuals seek to use self understanding and knowledge of their abilities or potentialities to create or develop jobs for themselves. Achievement of jobs through self-discovery results in intrinsic satisfaction, reinforces efforts for an individual to become all that he or she is able to become, and averts or prevents the individual from not making such an innate or divine contribution or depending on the assistance of government, non-governmental agencies (NGOs), or the organized private sector, for his fundamental human rights to be risked (Makinde and Alao, 1987; Hausermann, 1986).

Focus of talent and charismata to the disabuse of the fundamental human rights and employability of school leavers and graduates under economic recession, therefore, draws upon the internal workings of the individual than how environmental events influence the individual's behaviour, thoughts, or feelings. These internal workings are always as definitive as affective characteristics, which divide the internal dynamics of each or every individual into three basic sectors: the body, the self, and the ideal. With body, the self generated jobs of the individual will be those which have to do with the sensations of warmth, pain, taste, pleasure, sight and physiological demand for food, sport, Christian activities, environmental and community health and sanitation initiatives and so on. Their source is what psychodynamic theorists tag the id; the humanists: the organic self; and Christians and Eastern religions: the flesh or body. The jobs are simply those which satisfy what one senses, what one feels, and what one wants (Yates, 1985).

The jobs are those that thrive on values and beliefs, attitudes, appreciation, interest, social relations, emotional adjustment, habits and life style (Ojerinde and Falayajo, 1984). With the self, the self generated jobs are those within the larger framework of human development. The jobs reflect an orderly process of change and growth spanning through a number of stages that the individual necessarily undergoes as a result of the interaction between biological maturation, social experience, and inherited aptitude. The jobs thrive on opportunities to play various roles and evaluate the extent to which the results of the role played meet approval of superiors and fellows. The jobs are therefore, the individual's conception, or idea of his identity or being as a result of the interaction of his inherited aptitudes, neural and endocrine makeup and social experience (Makinde and Alao, 1987). The jobs are those that enable the individual reveal the picture of himself; the sort of person he

expects to be in some future time; the picture he thinks a typical person of his own age, sex and social class would have of himself and how his acquaintances would describe him (Lovell, 1983). Hence, to psychodynamic theorists the self ego'; to the humanistic theorists, the 'inorganic self' and to many religions the 'soul'. In all the jobs are those that try to make future better than present or the past (Yates, 1985).

With the ideal, however, the jobs remain those which represent the individual's goals and ethics or morals; that is, the person the individual should be, the way the individual should behave, think, and feel and so on. The psychodynamic theorists call their origin the 'superego' (Yates, 1985).

This position is confirmed by table 1. The tables shows that though from about the mid-1980s there was non-formal sector employability for school leavers and tertiary institution graduates, self employing personality trait prone job offered opportunities to many.

Table1: Sectorial Distribution of Personality Trait Prone Employment in Nigeria

Sector	1980	1985	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1996	1998	2000	2003
Agriculture	60.0	57.8	58.7	60.7	60.4	59.8	59.8	59.8	59.8	1.38	1.38	1.38
Mining and Quarrying	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.55	1.55	1.55
Manufacturing and Processing	17.0	18.2	10.0	10.0	10.2	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	18.84	18.84	18.84
Electricity, gas, and water	0.2	0.2	1.5	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	0.76	0.76	0.76
Construction and building	1.1	1.2	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	3.39	3.89	3.89
Trade, Restaurants and Hotels	NA	5.60	5.60	5.60	5.60	5.60						
Transport and communication	0.6	0.6	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	3.49	3.49	3.49
Banking, Finance and Real Estate.	NA	9.36	9.36	9.36	9.36	9.36						
Social services	5.6	5.6	9.7	9.0	9.0	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.2	55.63	55.63	55.63
Distribution	15.2	16.0	17.1	16.1	16.2	16.3	16.3	16.3	16.3	NA	NA	NA

Sources: Federal Republic of Nigeria, Report by the ILO Employment Policy and Strategy Formulation Mission to Nigeria 21st October-22nd November, 1996, Table 1, p.3; Dabalen, A and Oni, B(2000).

The table shows agriculture, manufacturing and processing, building and construction, distribution, social services; banking, finance and real estate, transport and communication, and trade, restaurant and hotels offered employment to school leavers and graduates. This was though with varying proportions from 1980 to 1996 and from 1996 to 2003.

The philosophy is, therefore, not essentialism, which associates resolution of unemployment and protection of fundamental human rights with large bodies of knowledge collected over many years; perennialism, which identifies abuse of human rights and unemployability of school leavers and graduates with discipline of the mind through the study of selected excellent subjects; reconstructionism, which associates employability of school leavers and graduates and protection of human rights in global economic recession with creation of a planetary social order and functioning of schools of the world as engines powering reconstruction of the earth, men and cultures to be the only means of ensuring world-wide peace; but existentialism, and progressivism. Existentialism associate employability of school leavers and graduates and protection of their human rights, at instances of economic down turn not only with intellectual or rational exercises, but the whole individual in his emotional, intellectual and physical passions. Jobs creation and exercises of fundamental human rights are consequences of individuals' exploration of their own feelings and relativity of their own ideas to their own life. Progressivism, however, identifies employability and the flourish of fundamental human rights with study of the individual to discover his interest, the problem he encounters and his purposes in life (Amadi, 1990; Nweke, 1989). Freedom which consists in an individual freely choosing to be what he wants to be, or allowing others to make him what he wants to be underlies the self employment opportunities of the unemployable school leaver and graduate and the consequent production of his fundamental human rights. To this end, freedom remains the major attribute to his covention of job opportunities. Freedom systematically matches the typologies of respective individuals with various corresponding typologies of their personality bound work environments.

Thus, every self employment of an informal sector unemployable school leaver or graduate may be said to be the consequence of personality characteristics that fall into any of the following:

Realistic type: Self employing job opportunities open to this type of personality characteristics are those which emphases manual labour and activities demanding manipulation of physical environments. Such job opportunities feature engagement in concrete activities. The job opportunities are thus usually those of farmers,

machinists, builders, drivers, surveyors, wrestlers, civil engineers, mechanical engineers, footballers, musicians, entertainers, cooks, filter mechanics, auto-electricians, auto-mechanics, spray/sign writers, welders, carpenters, masons, plumbers, domestic electricians, refrigeration and air-conditioning technicians etc (Ngwu, 2003; Petter, 2010; Makinde and Alao, 1987).

Investigative type: Job opportunities available to people of this personality type are those demanding thoughtful and precise dispositions. They are those which require abstract thinking, inquisitiveness, less sociability, hesitation to assume leadership functions. The potentials are those peculiar to scientist, academics, espionage, intelligence agencies, police, etc (Makinde and Alao, 1987; Petter, 2010; Aderindye, 2004).

Social type: The job opportunities here are those that feature person-oriented activities, or interpersonal relationship. They are those peculiar to teaching, counselling services, broadcasting, advertising, publicity, vending, social work, public relations, preaching, focus group discussions, etc. Their characteristics are good language and interpersonal skills (Makinde and Alao, 1987; Petters, 2010; Aderinoye, 2004).

Artistic type: Job opportunities of formal sector unemployable graduates and school leavers in this personality type require creativity, non-conformity to existing job opportunities, or their themes, settings, diction, points of view, and characterization, and expression of peculiar self conceptions, ideas, feelings and actions. They are always as definitive as music, artistry, writing, drama, fine arts and painting; wood and bronze carving; poetry, rural crafts, basket and cloth weaving; iron, silver, gold and bronze smithing; hunting; sculpturing, decorating, barbing, drumming; dancing and acrobatics; hair-plaiting, dress-making, boat-making, leather-working, soap-making, singing, pottery-making, mat-making, bead-working, gold-washing, iron-ore working, threshing, glass-making, brass-working, dyeing, esusu-collecting (local banking), catering, food selling and vending, wine selling and vending, wine tapping, and trading in all kinds of merchandise (Fafunwa, 1974; Makinde and Alao, 1987; Ngwu, 2003; Petters, 2010). They involve interpersonal relations, fashion, taste, entertainment, recreation, relaxation, refreshment and impulse.

Enterprising type: The job opportunities peculiar to formal sector unemployable school leavers and graduates in this personality type are those which require social skills and manipulation of others for either economic or political gains. They are, therefore, job opportunities which require persistence, risk taking, self confidence; information on clients, supplies and competitors; experts' business and technical pieces of advice; useful facts, methods, procedures, basic concepts, principles, contacts and information network; seeing and acting on new business and technical opportunities; seizing unusual opportunities to use equipment, land, workspace and assistance from agencies, institutions and government; acting to do things which set new or meet existing standards; striving to do things faster, but cheaper; development and using logical step-by-step plans; using deliberate strategies, influences and persuasion; using business and personal contacts; evaluating achievements vis-à-vis alternative achievement strategies; and monitoring progress in order to switch over to alternative achievement strategies where and when imperative (Arikpo, 2005)

The opportunities are, therefore, as they can or could be existent of politics, business enterprises; trade, commerce, and industry; banking, insurance, salesmanship, stock-markets, etc (Makinde and Alao, 1987; Petters, 2010).

Conventional type: Self employing opportunities open to non-formal sector employable school leavers and graduates of this personality type are those which emphasize orderliness, regimentation and routine activities; accountancy, civil service, book-keeping, the armed forces, and other security services. Others are as peculiar of village headship, chieftaincy, kingship, tax-collection, heraldry, judiciary, priesthood (Fafunwa, 1974; Makinde and Alao, 1987; Petters, 2010).

In all of these job opportunities, the non-formal sector employable school leaver, or graduate is not decided for, led, guided and persuaded by others, government, employers of labour, or non-governmental organizations and agencies, but his or her personality type. It tries to get him or her decide for himself or herself what his or her job opportunities are: what, if anything he or she will willing to do to either create or secure them; and how he or she can best organize, plan, and act to carry the project through to the security of his or her fundamental human rights and that of others. Each personality type stimulates in the unemployable school leaver and graduate a process of self determination, self help for individual mobilization, social justice, self emancipation and economic recovery (Batten and Batten, 1978).

Equally, they put an end to an increasing strained industrial atmosphere common of countries' industrial relations. That is, the number of trade disputes declared relative to 1989 between 1990 and 1991 would have been avoided if emphasis was self than formal sector employment.

Table 2: Industrial relations

Description	1989	1990	% change	1991
Trade disputes	144	174	20.8	204
Work stoppage	80	102	27.5	117
Worker involved (000)	157	255	61.8	460
Man-days lost (000)	580	1,339	130.9	2,257
Work stoppage/trade dispute ratio	55%	55%		57%

Source: Federal Ministry of Employment, Labour and Productivity Lagos; S.I. Oladeji (1993).

From the table, relative to 1989, the number of trade disputes declared in 1990 and 1991 rose, respectively, by 21% and 42%. Incidence of work stoppages exhibited the same trend; disputes rose from 55% in 1989, to 59% in 1990, but fell a little to 57% in 1991 (2% fall); the consequence was, however, quite discomforting strikes; loss of man-days, severely strained industrial relations and involvement of a large number of workers in the trade dispute. From the table in 1989 and 1990 workers' involvement stood at about 62%, but increased to about 192.6% in 1991. The man-days lost rose from 1,339, 105 in 1990 to 2,257, 382 in 1991. These, ofcourse, respectively represented 130.9% and 289.2% over 1989. Figures (Oladeji, 1993). All these negative industrial relation would have disappeared if emphasis was self employment. Step by step plans; using deliberate strategies, influences and persuasions; using business and personal contacts; evaluating achievements vis-à-vis alternative achievement strategies where and when imperative (Arikpo, 2005).

Hence, the formal sector unemployable disposition of the school leaver and graduate, rather educates both to become what they are in the labour market; it provides both environments within which valuable potentials innate in them can be developed to their greatest height as job opportunities, through reasoning, imagination, remembering, etc. Theory is that of mental discipline or faculty psychology.

The disposition does not educate the unemployable school leaver or graduate to become what he is not. He or she is not an energy system which attempts to secure employment opportunities by responding to other persons or energy systems with which he or she interacts through the sense organs (Amadi, 1990).

II. Conclusion

The paper examined the influence of personality traits on formal sector unemployable school leavers' and graduates' self job security and generation and implication for human rights protection. Its position showed that school leavers and graduates considered unemployable in the formal sector could become self employed and protect their fundamental human rights when they rather depend on their distinct personality types than assistance from governments' and non-governmental organizations' retraining programmes.

Based on this position, it is recommended that the content and context of the school and tertiary institution curriculae be such that will stimulate in their recipients a process of self determination and self help by (1) encouraging them to as individuals organize to meet more of their own needs for themselves; (2) helping them both as individuals and groups to develop the will and competence to manage their own affairs and in the process increase their status and feeling of self respect; (3) getting them to as individuals know, like and respect their peculiar potentials and to distinctly think and talk about them more and more as their innate body, self and ideal rather than 'we' or 'they'; and (4) educating them partly to ask questions that will help them think more systematically and relevantly than they otherwise would, and partly by providing any relevant information, skills, equipment, and sufficiently strong incentives they need and would otherwise lack.

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