


Chapter 8

Counselling and Psychological Strategies for Improved Entrepreneurial Tendencies in the Nigerian Military

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines post-retirement career pathways of ex-service personnel in the Nigerian military via entrepreneurship activities. One of the measures taken to assist ex-service personnel get adjusted into the civil life is the establishment of vocational training, which helps to facilitate viable entrepreneurial events. However, there are psychological issues that must be tackled in order to effectively transit into entrepreneurship. The chapter, therefore, looks at these issues to address the concept of entrepreneurship and its tendencies in the Nigerian military. The findings suggest that objectives and components of entrepreneurship education being advocated should be given to personnel early enough and throughout their military career.

INTRODUCTION

Career is a term that has been variously defined by different authors as a result of different orientations of the authors. Hence the term is variously understood. In many instances, the terms career, vocation and occupation are used synonymously. Such a narrow view of career is problematic in that it is aligned only with paid

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employment. Rather, a career encapsulates the variety of occupational roles which individuals will undertake throughout life. It includes paid and self – employment, the different occupations which person may have over the years and periods of unemployment and unpaid occupations such as that of student, voluntary worker or parent. Arthur, Lawrence and Hall (1989) suggested that a career is the evolving sequence of a person's work experience over time. The concept of career has broadened to include pre-vocational, vocational and post vocational activities and other life roles and contexts. The above is a slight illumination into an individual's lifetime engagement. Meanwhile, career roles could manifest in different forms and dimensions to include entrepreneurial activities. The Nigerian military recognized the potential of its personnel and the need for them to have a lifelong fulfilling career (including post retirement) coupled with the fact that most of the personnel, upon retirement are still at the productive age and able to contribute significantly to the economy and development of the nation. Hence the Nigerian military made adequate provision for vocational and entrepreneurial training of its retiring personnel. The aim of this pre-retirement entrepreneurial training is to build, sustain, enhance small business development and create jobs through the retired military personnel as well as to prepare the individuals for resettlement into civil life (Yusuf & Minai, 2016). This training could be said to have positive impact on self-employment and significant growth of small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria. However, most of these ventures are often short-lived. This is because entrepreneurship is developmental and involves a lot of intricacies in terms of processes, decision making, competencies and skills which in most situations require professional assistance and making interventions from experts. Therefore, this paper tries to identify some of these challenges. In addition, it highlights counselling as an intervention strategy by professionals to improve entrepreneurial tendencies in the Nigerian military.

Concept of Entrepreneurship

The term “entrepreneurship” is derived from the French verb “entreprendre” and the German word “unternehmen” both of which means to undertake. Entrepreneurship has many definitions by various theorists in the entrepreneurship field, from the classical period of Irishman Richard Cantillon, who in 1737 first defined entrepreneurship as “self-employment of some sort”. It has been observed that there are no single definitions of entrepreneurship, this is partly due to differentiated traditions within the field of entrepreneurship research including anthropology (De Montoya, 2000) social science (Swedbury 1993), economics (Casson 2003; Shane, 2003) and management (Drucker, 1999). Consequently, Hisrich, Peters and Shepherd (2007) define entrepreneurship as the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort assuming the accompanying financial, psychic and social risks and

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