



IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS INTO THE EFFICACY OF AN ONLINE AUTOMATED SKILL ACQUISITION AND JOB REFERRAL SYSTEM FOR UNEMPLOYED PERSONS IN THE NIGERIAN SOCIETY

Dr. Obioha Iwuoha, Camillus C. Oparah, Victoria Oyedepo, Dr. Ijeoma Emeagi
Department, of Computer Science
Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri
Email: ohaobi@yahoo.com, Chikwe123@yahoo.com, Oviki73@yahoo.com, ijemeagi@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

It is no longer news in Nigeria that government jobs are hardly available and enough for the teeming populace of job seekers. These job seekers include graduates from various institutions of high-level, non-graduates and persons of varied ages. The only option for these job seekers is self employment but they cannot succeed in this venture without having a skill. Skill acquisition will ensure an entrepreneur delivers good service to his/her customer and therefore maintain their patronage overtime. This would ensure that the entrepreneur could earn a living from the business and not crash out of business with their capital included. The aim of this paper is to describe how an online software could be effectively used to provide entrepreneurial skills for the unemployed and also ensure that they get job recommendations after the skill acquisition. The research methodology used is structured systems analysis and design methodology using the logical data modeling technique which involves identifying and documenting data requirements needed for the creation of a new system. The use of this online software will ensure a sharp drop in the population of unemployed persons in Nigeria. It would also help reduce crime and restiveness in the Nigerian society. The information communication technology body of knowledge can now solve unemployment issues and entrepreneurial business patronage problems using this paper.

INTRODUCTION

In-depth analysis means thorough and comprehensive break-down of an issue into an understandable form. Efficacy is the degree or ability to produce a desired effect from something. Therefore, this paper emphasizes on the thorough explanation how an online skill acquisition and referral software system could be effectively used to solve employment issues in Nigeria. Skill acquisition is the ability for a person to be trained on a particular task or function overtime and then he/she will become an expert in it. The particular task or function which the person is been

trained on is called a skill (Carter et.al, 2018). Examples of skills include car mechanical repair, welding and fabrication, computer systems maintenance, subject teaching, nursing and tailoring. Skill acquisition is necessary so that an entrepreneur understands the business he/she is going into, thus providing solutions to customers instead of causing more problems for them. An entrepreneur who starts a business without acquiring skills with respect to that business stands a risk of losing all his/her customers due to inefficiency, slowness and outright confusion. Skill acquisition ensures business growth, ability to with-stand competition and ability to train others to succeed in the same venture. Skill acquisition involves two sets of persons; they include the trainer and the trainee. The trainer is the expert in the skill, who teaches the trainee - or the person wants to learn. Skill acquisition for a particular business is needed and undergone by the person who wants to venture in to that type of business, but does not have the required understanding for the business (Davids etal, 2008). This person is called an intending-entrepreneur for the specified business and also a trainee for the skill acquisition of the specified business. Skill acquisition is usually done at the workshop or office of the skill acquisition trainer. It is here that all the necessary knowledge required by the trainee to carry out a defined business is implemented. Definitely, when field work is required, the trainer will have to take the trainee into a primary assignment and monitor the trainee closely (Robles, 2016).

Skill acquisition is essential the moment a person realizes that he/she knows little or nothing about a particular business he/she wants to engage in as an entrepreneur. Skill acquisition would ensure that the entrepreneur does good customer service delivery and ensure steady and consistent customer satisfaction. Skill acquisition involves a situation where an expert in a particular field of endeavor makes out time to teach a novice in that field over a period of time, all the knowledge needed to be a professional in that field. This activity will involve the use of tools that include white boards, pen and paper, precision set, smart phones and even the internet. The trainee must make out time for the training and be very dedicated and zealous in order to achieve his/her aim of skill acquisition over a period of time (DuBrin, 2008). The instructor or trainer must be a calm intelligent person who is patient enough to describe away encountered scenarios. Above all, documentation is essential on the part of both the trainer and the trainee. Using documentation, the trainer keeps tabs of the trainee's training progress

overtime. The trainer must have to document all he/she have learnt from the trainer for revision purposes and future referrals. For skill acquisition training to occur successfully both the trainer and the trainee must keep appointments. An appointment requires clearly stated date, time and venue for meeting, which must be acknowledged by both the trainer and the trainee. There are two basic types of skill acquisition procedures. They include;

1. Instructor-based skill acquisition; and;
2. Non instructor-based skill acquisition.

Non instructor based skill acquisition is further divided into two, which include

- a. Self-based offline skill acquisition
- b. Web-based skill acquisition.

Instructor-based skill acquisition involves a situation where an expert is present and available to act as an instructor and teach a trainee how to be proficient in a skill. Date, time and venue is fixed and kept by both the instructor and the learner, in other to achieve the acquisition of a particular skill overtime (Rao, 2010). In this situation, skill acquisition will not occur if the instructor is not present. This type of skill acquisition guarantees that the learner or trainee could ask the instructor peculiar questions and get detailed explanations with instance without respect to time and space.

In the non-instructor-based skill acquisition procedure, the instructor or trainer is not physically present or present at the same date, time and venue of the training appointment. This procedure is achieved by the trainer recording the entire training activity using video or sound recorder, in some cases, using a manual (Sommerville, 2007). This recorded material can then be accessed by the trainee and used in order to gain the knowledge of a specified skill. Self-based offline skill acquisition involves a type of non-instructor-based skill acquisition procedure where the trainee learns at his/her pace from a recorded source that is not connected to the internet. This procedure avoids internet network issues but the user cannot get feedbacks from the trainer on certain confusing issues in real-time online or even a later response from an e-mail. Before recorded training source is built, care is taken to test its efficacy in training novices to become professionals, this will now guarantee its reliability to deliver its services successfully (Rao, 2010). Having this as a fact, the recorded training source which might be in video, audio or written form,

produces better training results than an instructor-based procedural training.

Web-based skill acquisition training is a type of non-instructor-based skill acquisition procedure where the trainee learns online via the internet using either a recorded source or an expert system software instruction kit which behaves like the real instructor but virtually in real-time. Though the web-based skill acquisition procedure may be paused at anytime and continued, the instructor appears to always be available for the trainee and patient enough to deliver quality lessons to him/her. Date, time and venue are irrelevant here but whenever the user is ready to learn, the virtual instructor is always available (Rifkin, 2008). One of the drawbacks of this procedure is that instead of practical assignments deployed in real-life scenarios, practical assignments for the user are done in computer simulations. There is varied guarantee that the user would be very proficient in tackling real-life practical issues using only knowledge obtained from practical simulations. Web-based skill acquisition is the latest way of getting skill acquisition by a trainee would-be entrepreneur.

Job referral is a process of directing job to skilled personnel who can deliver or carry-out the tasks involved in the job, thereby providing solution to the directed job. Jobs arise when a customer has a need to get something done (Edith, 2015).

Things that need to get done include menial jobs like cooking, sweeping, cloth-washing; to skill-intense jobs like tailoring, house building, car mechanic, electronics repairs and general buying and selling of goods and services. Job referral is important because not every skilled personnel are proficient in job service delivery. It is then imperative to ensure that jobs are only directed or given to individuals that have acquired skills from reputed sources. These reputed sources like ones that would use web-based skill acquisition could be held liable should their skilled personnel product fail to deliver. In this case, the certificate or license of the skilled personnel is revoked and the personnel subjected to further compulsory skill acquisition training. With this policy in play, the customer is guaranteed good service delivery and rest of mind (Pinsker, 2015). Job referral is usually done by customers who recommend skilled personnel they have interacted with successfully to their friends and colleagues who require similar service. This job referral system could be very limited in coverage and would over-work a few skilled personnel with good repute. The latest way of carrying out job referrals involve setting up a web-based

platform which would showcase various jobs which customers might need to get done. When a customer accesses the website and chooses a job he/she wants to get done, the online system then checks stored skilled personnel database relevant to that job for availability. If they are available, the contact details of the skilled personnel for the job are then made available to the customer that needs it. If the customer engages the skilled personnel, the customer will notify the online system using a prompt, this will make the online system change the status of the skilled personnel to "engaged", until the customer comes back to the website and clicks on a button that verifies that the transaction between him/her and the skilled personnel was successful and have finished. This way, the status of the skill personnel on the online system will be changed to "available" again and is liable to get another job referral from the system (Schawbel, 2012). If there is a disagreement between the customer and the skilled personnel, the skilled personnel is expected to lodge a formal complaint to the system administrator of the website. Upon receiving the formal complaint from the skilled personnel, the system administrator will send an email or call the customer to hear from the customers' angle. Based on the facts obtained from the investigation, judgment is passed which might entail the skilled personnel license being revoked on the website and no further jobs assigned to him or the customer being banned from engaging any other skilled personnel for service delivery from the website. These actions help ensure quality control on service delivery and decorum in service engagement.

An unemployed person is one who has acquired a skill but does not have any job referrals or an avenue to earn a living using the acquired skill. Examples of unemployed persons include high institution graduates that just finished their national youth service, sacked workers from organizations and skilled personnel seeking job contracts (Slam, 2016). Unemployment is the state of having no job. Some causes of unemployment include;

1. When there are much skilled workers chasing after very few job opportunities. Once the vacancies in these places of job opportunities are filled up, the rest of the skilled personnel seeking to occupy those vacancies are left unemployed.
2. When the capital and skill required to start an entrepreneurship is lacking. If money to startup a small business venture is too high and running into millions, then the skilled worker, with insufficient finances, intending to venture into such a business will be

unemployed. If there is no skill on the part of the worker seeking a job, then unemployment becomes the workers' fate.

The solution to unemployment on the part of the worker is to acquire a skill and be so proficient in the acquired skill that he/she would be recommended by customers and websites. Skilled personnel should take advantage of job referral websites by registering with them and being available when they are called upon for service delivery. For high institution undergraduates and graduates, they should expose themselves to all the practical knowledge of their disciplines, take certification exams related to their course of study and then go into the streets and learn from skilled personnel who are using the knowledge of their discipline to earn a living (Sulich, 2016). In the course of this learning, no financial rewards should be expected.

Online skill acquisition and job referral software system is an application software that allows intending entrepreneurs of a specified business venture to learn the business skills online using the web-based skill acquisition approach. When the trainee has finished learning the skill and a certificate is issued to him/her, the online software will always recommend him/her to a customer that comes to the website to seek for services related to the skill learnt by this trainee (Zielinski, 2013). This is because the online software also has a customer friendly section, where a customer could choose job services he/she want to get done. This online software brings the solution to unemployment, which is skill acquisition and job referral afterwards, to the door step of the unemployed. This online software system curbs the need for transport money to get the training venue, teacher presence euphoria and no link to customer contacts.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this paper is as follows;

How the Online Skill Acquisition and Job Referral System Works

On the home page of this online software system which is a website, there are two main options which include;

1. Learn a skill
2. Get a job done

If the user chooses option 1 which is "Learn a skill", then a new page opens where the user is asked to register. The registration process will

require the user in to provide his/her full name, current passport photo, phone number, email address, bank name, bank account number and current address. After the user's registration, the user is then given an array of skills to choose only one in order to start the skill acquisition process. When the user chooses a skill of choice, the four options are made available to the user, they include;

1. course outline and the duration for the entire skill acquisition process
2. Video tutorials and estimated duration for viewing.
3. E-books and study time frame.
4. Phone numbers for live practicals, which will be based on the area the user is residing with respect to the user registration protocol.

Upon being proficient in live practicals and successful completion of the skill acquisition process, the user is issued a certificate and automatically made a resource person, should the acquired skill services be needed from the website in future by customers. The online system will require only 10 percent of the wage paid to its recommended skill personnel in order to ensure continuous advertisement of the website on social media, other website and the mass media. These adverts will help curb aging of skilled personnel waiting for job referrals from the online software system. When the user chooses option 2 which is "Get a job done", an array of menial and professional services are displayed on a new page for the user, who is now deemed as a customer by the system, to choose from based on the user's need. Upon choosing a service, the user is prompted to register in the system. The registration process will require the user in to provide his/her full name, current passport photo, phone number, email address and current address. After registration by the customer, a name, related phone number or numbers of skilled personnel, expected work duration and price of the service are displayed on a new page for the customer to consider. Options are displayed underneath the list for the customer to either choose to accept or decline. If the customer declines, then the page closes and the customer is brought back to the "Get a job done" page. If the customer accepts, then a new page opens and the account details where the customer will pay in the fee is displayed. Alongside the account details is an option for the customer to screenshot the payment details he/she has done and upload it on the online system. Upon confirmation of payment, the online system sends N100 recharge card to the related skill personnel to make a phone call to the customer and immediately schedule an appointment. This N100 is part of the 10

percent deducted from the wage of the skilled personnel. Therefore using this system, the customer does not give the skilled personnel any money. It is online software system that pays the skilled personnel. If the service requires buying replaceable parts, the customer pays into the online software system's account and the system buys the parts and gives it the skilled personnel to install. The skilled personnel will use a "customer affairs" page to key in the tools needed to prosecute a customer's job. This page also will have a complaint section for the skill personnel to use against the customer if the need arises. The customer also has his/her complaint section which will be located in a "work status" page that is generated once the customer has paid for a service. Once the admin receives a complaint either from the customer or the skilled personnel, a phone call is placed to the party being complained about to get his/her own side of the story. The admin then passes judgment based on evidences obtained. The judgment might include skilled personnel or client being blacklisted on the system temporarily or permanently. If the service delivery is done successfully and the customer is impressed. The customer will choose the option of "service well delivered" on the "work status" page. This indicates the service delivery has been achieved and the system can change the status of the engaged skilled personnel to "available mode" so that he/she could be considered from other jobs. It the duty of the skilled personnel to urge the customer to visit the website and give a final verdict on the service delivery. If the customer refuses, the skilled personnel can lodge a complaint using the "customer affairs" page. Upon a successful service delivery, the related skilled personnel bank account is credited with the approved sum.

Considerations

The following considerations should be noted while using this new system. They include;

1. There is no guarantee that a user will finish learning a skill in the stipulated time. But anytime the user logs into the system, he/she will be directed to resume where he/she stopped. The system will keep logs but cannot force a user to finish learning a skill.
2. Lack of trust might make a customer not to go all the way with the service delivery process due to the fact that he/she must pay before service delivery.
3. Judgment will be passed on a customer who does not pick his/her calls when the admin places a phone call to him/her.

CONCLUSION

An online automated skill acquisition and job referral system for unemployed persons in the Nigerian society is a reality and can be achieved using this new system. The proper usage and adoption of this new system will ensure a sharp reduction in the rate of unemployment and lack of service delivery satisfaction in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations have been made. They include;

1. The Nigerian government should sponsor conferences, workshop and symposiums where the knowledge of how to use this online software would be taught and people practice it using their smart phones, since the new online software is mobile friendly.
2. This new online software should be advertised over all the mass media firms in Nigeria at no cost. Since the target of this software is primarily on skill acquisition.
3. The software developer team of this new online software should be placed on the federal government payroll to ensure new updates and features and regular and prompt bug fixing and software efficiency.

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