

## DIGITAL MENTORING: A THERAPY FOR GOOD TEACHING AND BAD TEACHING

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### *Abstract*

*There is high unemployment in Nigeria and regrettably graduate teachers are also involved. Scholars have proffered as solution, funding by government, change in students' attitude and review or scrapping of outdated curriculum. These do not appear to suffice as the challenges remain prevalent. This study used secondary sources of information based on teaching and challenges of unemployment and proposed a solution that could possibly reduce malaise especially among graduate teachers. The idea of digital mentoring was considered alongside the benefits that are derivable from its application. The innovation to utilize technology to promote lifelong learning by digital mentoring is expected to assist in reducing underemployment and unemployment when adopted. Recommendations were made regarding the establishment of a teaching space by tertiary institutions for graduate teachers to interact on career growth after schooling rather than making them resign to fate after graduation.*

Keywords: Digital mentoring, tertiary institutions, teaching, education, unemployment

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### Introduction

A fragment of the concern of the problem of unemployment is the teaching that mentees and learners get while they are in school or under apprenticeship. The worth of the teaching defines the result that the students possibly exhibit after training. If the quality of the teaching is good enough, it is expected to also produce good results and if the teaching is considered bad, the result is anticipated to be bad also in most circumstances.

The high unemployment rate in Nigeria, the challenges of youths becoming redundant after investing several years in

the university classroom and the frustration they receive after graduation call for a review of the teaching methods currently in use in our present day society. Unemployment rate was reported as 27.1% in the second quarter of year 2020 and for the same period, the unemployment rate of 34.9% was reported for age 15-35 by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2020). That jobless rate was higher than the report of 2016 by the same bureau (NBS 2016).

Consequent upon the problematic nature of underemployment and unemployment in the society, there is a need to strategize

and utilize technology to promote lifelong learning through digital mentoring. Digital Mentoring has to do with the support people receive to build their confidence and skills in digital technology. It is about inspiring people to use digital technology for support through the use of computers, mobile devices and the internet. Contemporary societies faced with youth unemployment and career are being tasked to deliberately explore digital mentoring for reinforcement of the teaching and learning process. This is because scholars, both past and present, have continued to review ideas on how to provide answers to the unending issues of unemployment in Nigeria (Oke & Fabamise, 2018). However, having the knowledge-based skills that are devoid of physical representation of what such cognate skill could demonstrate has been shown to be a disadvantage to the society.

The high turnout of graduates yearly by various institutions of learning and the challenges of such a vast number of promising individuals ending up as jobless or underemployed citizens, underscore the need to rebuke such trainings that do not meet with the expectations of those who are supposed to profit by it. When such concentrated expectations and hope of learners becoming gainfully employed and self-reliant after graduation fails, it has worked contrary to their initial ambition of going to school. If one of the goals of tertiary education as stated in the National Policy on Education include contribution to national development, reduction of skill shortages (FGN,2014) is anything to go by,

then understanding the challenges of skill shortages and management as they currently apply to Nigeria could assist in solving the high rate of unemployment in our society. It is time to be more proactive by making concerted effort to move away from bare classroom knowledge-based skills to a technologically adaptive and innovative education landscape in the nation. The time is ripe to ruminate on digital mentoring for adoption as a collaborative strategy for a revitalized classroom that can consolidate good teaching and ease out bad teaching for better results in our 21<sup>st</sup> century society.

When these challenges are resolved and a new future is charted for education to accommodate digital mentoring, the increasing cases of insecurity, youths associated vices and instability in the socio-economic environment of our nation would have been addressed as a panacea for independence of the youths to accomplish self-reliance.

#### Literature Review

Teaching as a professional practice in Nigeria education needs new and innovative approaches that are amenable to global practices that can improve the current teaching experience in the country for the better. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century is replete with great changes in the teaching procedures globally and the realities of innovative ideas, redefining or modifying the traditional methods as inadequate cannot be over emphasised.

Observations in the society have given credence to the fact that leaving the students after teaching without equipping them with relevant information that can help them combat unemployment or underemployment leaves much to be desired. Mentoring in teaching is about indoctrination on teaching methods that are effective and applicable even after school.

Contemporary mentoring has gone beyond face to face classroom interaction to virtual or classrooms without walls in order to effectively tackle the difficulty of space, population, distance and individual differences among learners. Mentoring therefore, is the assistance an authority renders in guiding a learner or mentee to gain skills and directions for life and career. The mentor makes use of information and experiences at his disposal to model and shapen the mentee into moving along a desired or defined goal set to benefit him and humanity at large. Thus, digital mentoring grows and develops a learner through a stimulating trajectories of practice to build on satisfying career experience.

#### Good Teaching Bad Teaching

Teaching can be good or bad (Micheal, 2006). At the inception of the national policy on education document, it was stated as part of the objectives of teaching in tertiary education that learners are expected to develop skills that could enable them to be self-reliant and have knowledge based understanding that will make them useful to the society (FGN,

2004). Thus, the problem of underemployment and unemployment in Nigeria is an indicator that the anticipated results are lacking two decades after the policy has been publicized. A holistic framework that is germane is to ensure that the aim of self-reliance by the learners is achieved through pragmatic teaching programmes. Consequently, the need for the tertiary institutions to explore digital mentoring platforms as an alternative pathway for boosting teaching as a vocation becomes sacrosanct. A research on the enrolment and unemployment carried out between 1980 and 2014 appeals to how the curriculum in Universities are drawn and revealed that a relationship exists between enrolments in the institutions and unemployment due to pitiable curriculum (Dang, 2015). Other areas captured included the poor funding by government which truncates the efficiency of the skills learned by students. Where the skills are good enough to stimulate the likelihood of becoming self-reliant the issue of underfunding precludes them from displaying their potentials to the fullest. Some of the recommendations made in the past were that, government should increase funding, students should get more serious with their course work, the curriculum should be reevaluated and the need to resolve parental issues.

However, sustainability of tutoring the students was conspicuously omitted in the study. As institutions continue to lay claim on those that are succeeding in their careers, there is also a counter balancing need to factor in those who have been

made pedestrian as products of the cognate institutions. The implication is that the tree of teaching as a career or vocation is producing both good and bad fruits unabated. Then, there are such questions that require answers like; who takes responsibility for the unskilled graduates, is it the government, society, the tertiary institutions or the learners? The global reengineering of the education sector is on and we cannot afford to be left out hence, there is an urgent need for mindful mentoring in education to usher in the next century educators.

#### Role of Mentoring in the Society

Scholars have emphasized that in education, mentoring programs had assisted in career development (Muschallik & Pull, 2015). In this regard, emphasis was laid on tertiary institutions where youthful people who engaged in research were supported by more experienced hands. Stan Koki (202?) opined that for mentorship to be purposeful, the function of mentoring should be accepted as inclusive of involvedness, procedure and function for pragmatic effectiveness. As our contemporary world evolves, the idea of electronic mentoring had come into perspectives and scholars are identifying the stages that should be involved (Hamilton & Scandura, 2003). A three phase model was considered as namely, initiation, cultivation and separation. The model clarified the purpose, the ideas to be initiated, specific steps for implementation and assessment in summary. E- Mentoring as termed in the

research, is more relevant in the post Covid-19 society and could be applied to diverse platforms and media networks.

In another research, the role of digital literacy mentoring among post graduate students in tertiary institution was appraised (Elena, Oxana, & Anna, 2020). It was justified that librarians play a role in mentoring digital literacy among PhD students. However, the assertion should not be generalized because it was done in a more organized nation. Hence, where there are issues of redundancy in work place, post graduate students might have to learn the route.

Idleness is an insignia of ache in the labour market and the higher the percentage, the higher the distress in any nation. The initiatives of government about promoting some mentorship for the unemployed seems not to have provided the result that can be regarded as impactful. The study of Odia and Odia (2013) highlighted that the government of Nigeria has promoted agenda for graduates, unemployed in different shapes or names as Youwin and graduate internship. Despite all these and new programs including anchor borrower and National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) entrepreneurship programs, the need to create substitutes still exist because the number of graduates coming out of tertiary institutions yearly surpasses the jobs available. One of the reasons for this is that there are skill mismatch that make a lot of people jostle for few vacancies.

The concern of these up and coming Nigerians is how such a disorder and

national embarrassment can be stemmed or eradicated. The enthusiasm to provide answers should be rooted in a thorough and sincere collation of sufficient information on saleable skills needed in the labour market and resolve the areas of conflict. Thus, experts in the private sector, government organizations and the academics need to cooperate and collaborate on how to resolve training mismatches and boost skill deficits.

#### Current Realities for Digital Mentoring

The current realities in present day Nigeria show unequivocally that various mentoring programs by government to decipher the issue of unemployment has not yielded satisfactory results. This clearly shows that there are some inherent inadequacies in the vision, planning, implementation and performance of the programmes despite colossal funding. Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research reported that several years after students graduate, there are still about 20 percent of them that are jobless (NISER, 2013). The effect of spending four to five years in school without any assurance of job placement after graduation, is demoralizing to the youths. The situation is redeemable if the opportunity offered by the current redundancy is seized and utilised for career guidance and interaction that are blended with technological creativities. Statistics have shown that the population of the youth that are attached to technology is high hence, they are not supposed to suffer the magnitude of redundancy they are experiencing now.

They are the 'digital natives' who are more at home communicating with modern tools (Prensky, 2001). This is the most appropriate time to leverage on the advantage going by the validation of National Bureau of Statistics on the increasing importance of mobile technologies in Nigeria with here enormous population size and the need to take advantage of the innovation. According to the report, over 144 million Nigerians are on voice usage alone as far back as 2017. (NBS, 2018).

This communication option therefore can justify the need to give attention to the use of mobile technologies for mentoring purposes.

#### Methodology

Secondary data were used for this study. Teaching limitations and strategies of earlier works were identified. In addition, Information from books and germane facts were incorporated. Findings from the secondary data elicited the fact that the education system has hitherto promoted a teaching programme that has not produced the desired result of enhancing tutoring in career choice and life realities.

#### Results

Findings from previous studies showed that teaching could produce either good or bad results. In order to resolve the challenges of good and bad teaching, there is a need for the adoption of a lifelong learning through digital mentoring. Technological devices such as computers, mobile phones and devices

could still be used to follow up on impartation of valuable guidance to students especially when such graduate students are lacking gainful occupation after graduation. Expectedly, the experience shared by the tutors should be geared towards influencing and motivating the learners in getting practical solutions to their individual career problems through digital interactions. Consequently, such a liberal, innovative but inclusive platform can encourage the learners to contribute ideas that are potent and challenging to boost their redundant career. Assurance of internet connectivity and availability of technological applications as WhatsApp, YouTube, Zoom, Padlet among others need to be guaranteed. It is possible to provide a mutual but lifelong teaching space of value to the mentors and mentees. In this case, the teacher and the hypothetical ex-students are at liberty to redress precarious situations in their careers.

#### Discussion

Use of technology in all the spheres of human endeavour is what is commended to the global community especially the youths. Adopting pragmatic innovations that can transmit solutions to graduate unemployment or redundancy which have majorly bedeviled the youth population of the country can create a snowball effect on the resolution of the present hopeless and restive challenges of youth survival. It is high time stakeholders in education sector realized that teaching without follow-ups is not enough to serve as impetus for self-

reliance. It is needless emphasizing the fact that, lack of career guidance for real life situation makes cognitive skills learnt within the four walls of citadels of learning questionable.

#### Recommendations

This paper reviewed works on teaching as a vocation and the situation of high unemployment of graduates turned out of our institutions of higher learning. The reviews and findings prompted the following recommendations as appropriate for enhancing enduring results that can improve our present societal conditions. It was recommended that:

- i. the novelty of using digital mentoring in education and after graduation would negate the present loss of direction of learners in knowing essential pathways to follow when jobs are not yet available.
- ii. the use of internet connectivity and mobile devices should be made available and affordable for access, information gathering, storage and retrieval .
- iii. digital mentoring should be made to promote the goals of continuous mentoring of ex-students or learners until they become useful members of the society.
- iv. digital mentoring for improvement of teaching results needs to be given priority consideration.
- v. there is a pressing need for teaching to be taken away from total reliance on theoretical postulations from classroom walls through the provision of lifelong

teaching programmes for the youths.

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