

CAREERS IN PRINTING AS A MEANS OF DIVERSIFYING NIGERIA'S ECONOMY

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Abstract

Nigeria is a country that is blessed with abundant human and natural resources that when properly harnessed can accelerated her development. But sadly, the country depends mainly on oil as her main source of generating income. This has made it to be a consumer country instead of a producer country, and apparently impaired the creativity and innovative skills of the citizenry. The current global realities occasioned by the fall of crude oil price in the global market have put Nigeria in the economic quagmire known as Recession. This paper looks at printing as a viable source of employment for the teeming youth of Nigeria. It identifies various careers in the printing profession that when proper attention is given to them, can help turn the economic fortunes of Nigeria for the better. Not just in the area of job and wealth creation, but also in the area of technological break-through. These careers are Stenciling, Screen Printing, Graphic Designing, Colour Separation, Lithography, Direct Imaging, Heat Transfer, Binding, Letter Press, and Laminating. Other jobs, not directly involve in printing but connected with printing are production of printing equipment, ink and accessories, transportation and supply. This paper also recommends that Government, nongovernmental organisations and individuals should develop positive attitude towards the printing profession.

Key words: Career, Colour Separation, Entrepreneur, Graphic Design, Lithography, Recession, Stenciling, Diversification

Introduction

The economic growth of any nation largely depends on the technological and entrepreneurial advancement of her citizens. As it is popularly said that no nation can develop above the educational level of her citizens, it can perfectly be said that no nation can develop her economy above the level of her entrepreneurs.

The discovery of oil in Nigeria, even though a blessing, has also become a kind of curse. Due to the attitude of the Nigerian governments over the years, the oil boom has distorted and discouraged the attitude to work of average Nigerian citizens who prefers to avoid investments that require special skills and creativity. Average Nigerian citizens today especially the school graduates are jobs seekers instead of job creators, they roam the streets looking for jobs that are not just there. The school curriculum is largely responsible for this, as it is not geared towards equipping students with skills required for self-employment. (Akisola, 2009). Today, Nigeria is battling with unprecedented unemployment due to the total neglect of the basic needs of life that can help turn around things for the better. Nigeria's unemployment rate rose for the seventh straight quarter to 13.9 percent in the third quarter of 2016 from 13.3 percent in the previous period. It was the highest level since 2009, as the number of unemployed rose by 5.2 percent to 11.2 million, employment rose at a much slower 0.6 percent to 69.5 million and the labour force increased 1 percent to 80.7 million. Meanwhile, youth unemployment rate increased to 25 percent from 24 percent in the previous period. A year earlier, the unemployment rate was recorded at 9.9 percent. Unemployment Rate in Nigeria averaged 9.52 percent from 2006 until 2016, reaching an all-time high of 19.70 percent in the fourth quarter of 2009 and a record low of 5.10 percent in the fourth quarter of 2010. (NBS, 2016). Even though successive governments have

tried to develop some policies aimed at reducing unemployment and creating wealth among Nigerian citizens. Most of these policies leave much to be desired, as they are either merely lip service or poorly implemented due to lack of political will or corruption.

Also, the Nigerian governments fundamentally promote entrepreneurial knowledge through initiatives that build business confidence, positive attitude, pride in success, support and encouragement of new ideas, social responsibility, providing technological supports encouraging inter-firm and promotions of research and development. Drawing from the inspiration of Kirznerian's postulation of 'entrepreneurial' discovery process, entrepreneurship is a combination of the process and the individual. Shane and Venkataraman (2000) made a similar observation when they stated that: "entrepreneurship involves the nexus of two phenomena: the presence of lucrative opportunities and the presence enterprising individuals". Inegbenebor (1989) re-affirmed that entrepreneurship is a process about learning the skills needed to assume the risk of establishing a business. He explained that "entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities to establish and run an enterprise successfully". In the early 2000s, entrepreneurship education was introduced in the Nigerian higher institutions of learning as a mandatory course. The Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED) which has the objectives of teaching and encouraging students of higher institutions (especially in science engineering and technology SET) to acquire the entrepreneurial, innovative and management skills was established. The center's main goal was to make graduates self-employed, create job opportunities for others and to generate wealth.

Career is defined as an occupation which an individual is trained to do. It is a general progression of person's working professional life (Ajayi, 1985). In a nutshell, career can simply be said to be a person's vocation in which he earns a living from. There are numerous careers in printing that when properly harnessed can change the economic fortunes of Nigeria. Some of these careers are graphic designing, colour separation (laser or film printing) lithography, direct imaging, heat transfer, laminating, paper cutting and binding. Others are material production (such as papers, inks, printing machines parts, printing plates, printing accessories etc.), manufacturing of printing machines, printing merchandising (sales/transporting and delivery of printing products. etc. The printing industry has the capacity of employing millions of youths in Nigeria if the right policies are made and properly implemented.

The Concept of Printing

Printing is an aspect of production which is all embracing. Any attempt to define printing may not adequately embrace all that it stands for. To the ancient Greeks and Romans, printing may include not only utilitarian skills but also for aesthetic purpose such as posters, greeting cards, calendars, stickers, etc. (Uzoagba, 2000). In the Art profession, printing is an aspect of graphics, which is the Industrial or Applied arts that deals with information and communication (Reads, 1958).

Printing is production of images on a surface by applying ink with the aid of a medium (tool or machine). It is the process or business of producing copies of documents, publications, or images with ink. Printing can be done manually, that is stenciling (using paper) or with a screen (silk-screen or mesh), a framed protective covering consisting of netting or, with machine called printing machine or printer. The machine-based

printing is largely classified into three: the letter press, the offset (process printing) and the direct printing from the computer to the printer. In printing, images can be printed on papers, cards, sticker, flex, clothes (or fabrics), plastics and so on.

Printing can be defined as a process of reproducing text and images using a master form or template. The earliest examples include cylinder seals and other objects such as the Cyrus cylinder and the cylinders of Nabonidus. The earliest known form of woodblock printing came from China dating to before 220 A.D. Later developments in printing include the movable type, first developed by Bi Sheng in China. Johannes Gutenberg introduced mechanical movable type of printing to Europe in the 15th century. His printing press played a key role in the development of the Renaissance, Reformation, the Age of Enlightenment, and the scientific revolution and laid the material basis for the modern knowledge-based economy and the spread of learning to the masses. Modern large-scale printing is typically done by using a printing press, while small-scale printing is done free-form with a digital printer. Though paper is the most common material for printing, it is also frequently done on metals, plastics, cloth and composite materials. On paper it is often carried out as a large-scale industrial process and is an essential part of publishing and transaction printing.

History of Printing

The actual date that printing started is not yet known, it can however be said to have started as far back as the pre-historic era. In the cave, the prehistoric man did some printings. For example, he placed his hand on the walls of caves and blew colours of grinded soil (pigment) around the hand and when he removed it; the impression (negative) of his hand was produced on the walls of the caves. This marked the beginning of printing (popularly called stenciling). Numerous examples of such printings were found in caves in Lascaux, (France) Altamira, (Spain) Tassili, (Algeria) (Banjoko, 2000). The most notable form of printing in its earliest history is the woodblock printing. It is a technique for printing text, images or patterns that was used widely throughout East Asia. It originated from China in antiquity as a method of printing on textiles and later on paper. As a method of printing on cloth, the earliest surviving examples from China dated to before 220 A.D.

By the ninth century, printing on paper had taken off, spread to Korea and Japan, Turpan, Vietnam, Persia and Russia. This technique was transmitted to Europe via the Islamic world.

Types of Printing

There are two major types of printing. These are manual based and machine based printings. The manual based printing is basically the human energy driven with most of tools and equipment operating without electricity. Even though electricity may be involve at some point. Examples of manual based printing are stenciling and screen printing. The machine based printing is the printing done with machine powered by energy from electricity. Examples of machine based printing are off-set, letter press and direct printing.

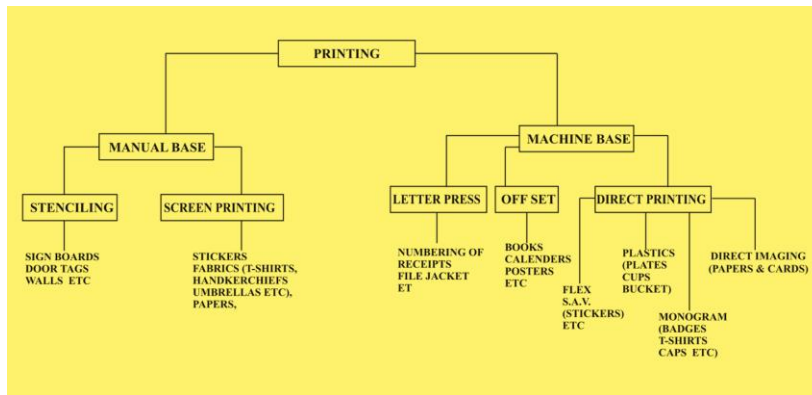


Fig. I, Diagram showing: the two major types of printing and there branches. Source: Banjoko, (2011)

Careers in Printing

Screen Printing: is the creating of images by forcing ink through a fabric screen (mesh) onto the surface to be printed. Screen printing is a technique whereby a mesh is used to transfer ink onto a surface, except in areas made impermeable to the ink by a blocking stencil. A blade or squeegee is moved across the screen to fill the open mesh apertures with ink, and a reverse stroke then causes the screen to touch the substrate momentarily along a line of contact. This causes the ink to wet the surface and be pulled out of the mesh apertures as the screen springs back after the blade has passed. Screen printing is also a stencil method of print making. It is also known as silk-screen, screen, serigraphy, and serigraph printing. One color is printed at a time, so several screens can be used to produce a multicoloured image or design (Wikipedia).

Graphic Designing: An outline, sketching, or planning, as of the form and structure of a work of art, an edifice, or a machine to be executed or constructed. Organisation or structure of formal elements in a work of art composition. The combination of details or features of a picture, building, etc.; the pattern or motif of artistic work, is the planning and arrangement of patterns, letters, picture etc. in a given space. In this given space can be a paper or computer. Designing often necessitates considering the aesthetic, functional, economic and socio-political dimensions of both the design object and design process. The professional who designs is called a designer.

Color Separation: Is the process by which original artwork is separated into individual color components for printing. The term *color separation* refers to both the process and the products. The process of *color separation* can be accomplished photographically.

Importance of Printing to the Nigerian Economy

Nigeria and Nigerians are facing the worst economic condition, due to lack of good economic and educational policies and proper implementation of the policies where they are properly made. The printing profession has numerous careers that can provide ample jobs. For example most of the printing

machines, equipment, plates, inks and even papers are imported. The few factories that are hitherto producing them in Nigeria have moved to other countries due to lack of electricity and hash government policies. In Nigeria there are about 450 large and medium scale printing companies, with about 500,000 people engage in one printing work or the other. But the industry has the capacity of engaging as many as 3,000,000 people if measures are put in place as printing is an everyday affair, and has no dull moments (NIPEX, 2011).

The Need for a citizen to learn a Career

The Nigerian population is increasing without the corresponding increase in job opportunities provided by government. For example, the Nigerian population is about 170 million, her work force stands at 74.5 million, 27.5 million are completely out of job, 24 million are engaged in menial jobs and earn between N5000 to N15000 (less than 1 dollar per day). The government is finding it difficult to pay her work force due to fall in oil revenue, due to dwindling global price and the activities of Niger Delta militants. Presently in Nigeria, most state governments owe their workers between 3-5 months salaries and many months of pension arrears. Many civil servants, who retired two or more years earlier, are yet to collect their gratuities. (Unity Train, 2016). Citizens must stop relying on government for jobs, look inwardly and change their attitude from job seekers to job creators. This is because most government policies towards job creation often fail due to many reasons like lack of political will, corruption, ineffective political leadership, and over-ambitious and unrealizable policy goals. Others are lack of continuity, sectionalism, ethnic basis and nepotism.

Conclusion

Printing as an entrepreneurial and innovative vocation has the capacity to turn around the economic fortunes of Nigeria. The numerous careers that abound in printing require policies of government that shift from rhetorics to addressing infrastructural decay to ensure growth and development. When government provides basic enabling environment for businesses to thrive it will have no course to worry creating employments. The private organisations and individuals will create jobs and generate wealth thereby enhancing the well-being of citizens and the growth of the economy. Printing provides numerous careers that when attention is given to by both the government and the citizens especially the youths, the Nigerian economy can be diversified from the monolithic heavy dependence on oil to the non-oil sector.

Recommendations

- i. Job creation in Nigeria should be private sector driven and not government driven.
Government should make and implement policies that are people-friendly. Individuals and groups can be encouraged to set up private businesses by government tax cancelation or reduction and also address infrastructure decay such as electricity, roads, etc. thereby creating an enabling environment for the businesses to thrive.
- ii. Government should make sure that the Nigerian economy moves drastically from buying and

- selling to creativity and innovation. This can be achieved through constant researches and implementation of new and better ways of improving the economy especially in the areas of science and technology like manufacturing, agriculture, tourism and so on. They should stop rhetoric and politicking but merge word with action.
- iii. The teaching of creative subjects in Nigerian primary and secondary schools should be encouraged. The teaching of art as a subject in primary and secondary schools should be made compulsory. This will develop talents in children who intend to specialise in vocational courses in future.
 - iv. Parents must develop positive attitude towards Art as a subject, by encouraging their children and wards to offer the subject, especially if they notice some artistic skills in their children. Parent should not force their children towards offering courses other than the ones they (children) prefer. They should only provide guidance to their children.
 - v. Entrepreneurship education should be made compulsory in Nigerian higher Institutions of learning, as students after graduation may want to fall back to such learned skills as careers in future.
 - vi. Soft loans should be given to school leavers and apprentices by government, private organisations and rich individuals at very low or zero interest rates to encourage young entrepreneurs.
 - vii. Industrial attachments, career days, excursions etc. should be made compulsory as part of the Nigerian educational system.
 - viii. The 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria needs to be revised and properly implemented by government and other stakeholders in the education sector.

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