Work: A Tool for Measuring Vocational Maturity and Social Expectation of Individuals (Adulthood) In Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
This study examined the nature and types of work in Nigeria with special reference to reasons why people work, stages in the working life of an individual including retirement and the counsellors role in assisting individuals to prepare for work. The importance of individuals’ work of life cannot be overemphasised. The whole essence of individuals working is to earn a living, avoid evil or undesirable behaviour, contribute to the development of society, achieve the goal of self-actualisation, fulfilling a social expectation and to maintain good physical and mental health. Besides, working is a tool by which we can make a way to the gate of knowledge, it is a road which leads to tomorrow, and it is a drug which can help us fit. All in all, working provides us so much that we love work. It is therefore recommended that people who engage in drug and currency trafficking, counterfeiting currency, gambling, human trafficking and nefarious activities in the country, should be oriented to desist from these types of unpatriotic undertakings and embrace more socially acceptable work.

Keywords: Work, Vocational maturity, social expectation, Individual and Nigeria

INTRODUCTION
In modern society, work has already been a necessary means by which all the people live in the world, inspite of a few exceptions. People work in order to get money to meet their living. As we all know, human being is a higher animal greatly more advanced and greatly different in many aspects from other common animals, such as cats, elephants, horses, monkeys, cows, cattle, oranges to mention but a few. Feeding is not the only aim that people live for, as is said in the Chinese saying “human beings are not living for only living.” People also need to make continuous progress personally in the modern and continually changing world. And all kinds of work give people one of the most effective ways to make progress.

People learn varieties of basic knowledge and abilities that they need to deal with all kinds of problems they may meet in study, life, or work in current society. All the abilities, except for those psychological functions, people need to live in the world are not innately, of which family and school could supply only a small part, and most of them must be given by work. For example, proper relationship in work is the basic warranty of your working successfully. While in work, you would learn how to deal with the relationship between you and your colleagues, or boss in the organisation. Such cordial relationship among workers will foster unity, love, harmony and purposeful in order to achieve maximum efficiency as well as goal of the organisation.

Work as it relates to occupations, vocations or professions implies some physical and/or mental exertion by which an individual seeks to earn an honest living. To work is one of the essential social expectations of adulthood in Nigeria and indeed many other parts of the world. Work is the
culmination of most academic or vocational training of the formal and non-formal training institutions. To work confers on the worker a considerable measure of social and economic security and acceptability among responsible members of a community. It is an indispensable element of responsibility and a vital criterion for measuring vocational maturity. Work ascribes a status which most persons, especially, the unemployed look to. This study is concerned with an examination of the concept of work, with a view to highlighting reasons why people work or should work, stages in the working life of an individual, including retirement, and the counsellor’s role in assisting individual prepare for work (Ezeji, 2001).

Nature and Types Of Work In Nigeria
Any undertaking, which an individual commits a substantial part of his time and effort for the purpose of earning a living, is his work. In Nigeria there are clearly defined working hours for different categories of workers. In each case, workers are expected to invest their time and effort to ensure that they do their work well. The extent to which a worker gets committed to his work depends among other things on the extent to which he is satisfied with the work as well as the magnitude of promise, which his said work holds for him. Keen interest stirs up satisfaction and consequently dedication, both of which lead to success in an undertaking. On the other, lack of interest destroys the spirit of commitment and devotion to work leading to lowered productivity and carelessness. Success in the working life of an individual or a group of people is measured in terms of the productivity associated with the said work-life as well as the degree of satisfaction derived from it. But productivity and satisfaction are closely related to incentives which workers enjoy or hope to enjoy in their work. Thus, when a worker enjoys or hopes to enjoy some incentives that are pleasing to him, he is likely to increase his devotion to the work (Azizbek, 2013).

There are different types of work, which individuals can engage in, some people are salaried, that is, they earn salaries or wages from their employers. The employers may be the Federal, State or Local Government and parastatals, or they may be private individuals or entrepreneurs who manage establishments of diverse dimensions. Such large-scale establishments may be in the form of industries, firms, commercial houses, or some other business. There are people employed in medium scale establishments such as smaller construction companies, agricultural farms, factories, textile mills, mention sent a few. Small scale establishments also employ persons who are usually paid smaller wages than the under government employment. Examples of small-scale establishments are the mechanics workshops, petrol filling stations, poultry farms, palm oil mills, chemist stores. Workers in these establishments receive salaries and wages of varying amounts often reflecting the scope of the business and/or the status of the work (Akpojotor, 2012).

Many Nigerians are self-employed and so do not depend on the government for salaries. A number of people work as artisans or skilled workman who are self-sustaining. These include cobbler, tailors, carpenters, dry-cleaners, painters, bricklayers and the likes. These groups of people depend for their daily bread on whatever they can earn each day. The various types of work call for various degrees of skills and competencies. Some call for mental or physical skills whole some attract very low income (Onyekuzi, 2013).

The jobs that attract very high incomes are those that are very specialised and involved skills that many members of the society do not and cannot easily possess. Such jobs are often characterised by prolonged periods of training and internship. Examples are the work of pilots, computer, scientists, and top government functionaries, among others. The jobs that attract middle level incomes are those of teachers, administrators and other civil servants. The low-income jobs are those, which anybody can easily engage in without any sophisticated training. Examples are the job of a messenger and cleaner (Ndu, 1984).

The types of work may also be distinguished by the degree to which they permit the worker to engage in leisure at the end of the day’s working period. Some workers dismiss at about half past three O’ clock in the afternoon, some four O’ clock. Such jobs would permit the worker to rest and still have time in the evening to participate in recreational activities such as games. Some other workers close the day at six O’ clock in the evening. In such cases the worker hardly has time for recreation in the evening (UNESCO, 2004).

Most types of paid work in Nigeria are honest engagements in the sense that the workers undertake activities beneficial to society and the nation in general. Some people, however, engage in dishonest
work, which fail to promote the nation’s economic and social well-being. Some people in self-employed jobs are fraudulent and dubious. Examples are people who engage in drug and currency trafficking, counterfeiting of currency, gambling, human trafficking and other social vices. Efforts should be made to re-orientate persons who engage in these types of unpatriotic undertakings towards more socially acceptable work. Whatever type of decent work an individual may engage in, there are certain reasons why people work or should work. (Onyekuzi, 2013)

**Reasons Why People Work**

Individuals are motivated to work by a number of factors. For example many people work in order to earn their living, avoid the temptation of engaging in anti-social or undesirable behaviour, contribute towards the development of the society, facilitate the goal of self-actualisation, fulfil some social expectation of the individual, and maintain good physical and mental health (Ezeji, 2001, Azizbek, 2013).

**Earn a Living:** One of the most important reasons why people work is to earn a living. In most parts of Nigeria and indeed the world over, the foremost purpose for which parents undertake to educate or train their children is to help them to earn income. Thus, most children after graduation from school believe that they should cease to be dependent on their parents or guardians. They therefore choose the jobs or work they like or those, which their academic or professional qualifications permit them to engage in, the major purpose of such work is for them to earn to living so that they can solve their problem.

It is beyond doubt that main reason why people work is to earn a living. A type of work may not be very interesting to a person. But if that is the only option open to the individual, he often must necessarily earn his living. Many school leavers of different descriptions today hardly succeed in finding the jobs of their choice or the jobs suited to their training. Those who studied pharmacy, engineering, biochemistry, veterinary medicine, marketing, have often had to take up teaching in secondary schools as the only option open to them because they need to earn a living.

Every growing person and indeed every adult is expected by society to succeed in securing a job when he is up to the age of doing so, in order that ultimately he will at least be able to cater for himself and where possible, assists other less fortunate members of his society. In order to fulfil this social expectation of being able to earn a decent living people must work (Obiyai & Ehimen, 2013).

**Avoid Evil or Undesirable Behaviour:** It is a popular belief among many Nigerian communities that the devil finds work for the idle person. Some people have put this saying more aptly that the mind is the devil workshop. These sayings and beliefs are in line with the fact that without a work, an individual is likely to be tempted to earn a living through some means considered undesirable by the society. Since every adult member of the society is expected to have a family of his own which should be cared for by the family head, it is not only desirable but in fact imperative that, every able-bodied adult must work. There may be no job opportunity open to him, but that situation does not cancel the fact that society expects him to be able to take care of himself, and his family. Therefore most adults must work in order to survive in an honest way (Okorie, 2000).

The escalating wave of crimes in Nigeria many other countries of the world are usually associated with the problems of unemployment. Many school leavers who have no work are tempted to survive through socially undesirable means for want of something decent to do. However, it is possible to avoid for himself when there is no salaried job. This can be done through a self-sustaining venture whereby the individual can some living without recourse to the government or any employer. Thus, an individual would wish to work because he considers it undesirable and anti-social to engage in such undertakings which society considers unsafe for its survival. This thinking is most worthwhile at this present time in the life of Nigeria. The philosophy of “dignity of labour” in it sinks deep into the consciousness of Nigerian is likely to be revolutionary by way of encouraging people to apply their hands and hearts towards self-reliant venture without necessarily waiting to be employed by anybody. In addition, people need to imbibe the idea that no job or work is mean, if from it one can feed oneself or cater for one’s needs (Hart, 2013).

**Contribute to the Development of Society:** Another reason why people work is to contribute to the development of their society. The society, in this context, may be one’s immediate community of residence, town, local government area, state or country. A person may primarily seek to earn a living
or evade engaging in anti-social practices. This thinking makes such a person to work and through working he contributes towards the development of the society.

An individual may contribute to society’s development through the goods and service he put into the system. The good may exist in the form of his material production which maybe some agricultural or industrial output. The service maybe in the form of his skills and competences invested in diverse aspects of the social and economic system. Such service may produce tangible or intangible products. The services of a pharmacist, textbook author, and a farmer’s produce, are examples of tangible products, while the work of the historian or lawyer are not easily visible or measurable. Both the tangible and intangible products of skilled personnel contribute towards the development of the Nigerian society. Thus, whatever honest labour a person invests into the social system produces some result that the adds to the goal of social, economic and other aspects of development (Ordu, 2012).

The overall development of the nation is therefore, a reflection of the aggregate contributions of each worker, whether self-employed or salaried. Therefore, a nation develops fast when there is substantial dedication to duty by her workforce. It should be the goal of all Nigerians to work towards her growth and development.

Achieve the Goal of Self-Actualisation: It is through the work people do that they attain the goal of self-actualisation. Every individual or at least many persons have their views or conceptions of their goals and ideals in life. Such conceptions differ according to individuals. Some people, in order to reflect these conceptions or ideals, set life goals for themselves that is, goal which they must strive to achieve in life. For some people, such like goals may appear selfish-emphasising the ideal of making a lot of money or other forms of wealth in order to be known around or to be popular. For some of the life goal may be to attain high political heights wherein they can assume positions of leadership or authority. Others would wish to be highly influential wherever they may be. Some other person may have life-goals that are less selfish for example, some people may be desirous of contributing toward the welfare of humanity without necessarily being known all around. Some many wish to use their resources to serve the less fortunate members of the society. Others may wish to occupy positions of responsibility, not as ends, but as means to ends which are service-oriented (Fhitman, 2005).

An individual, having set any of the above goals for himself, works towards it. He focuses most of his attention towards the set goals and strives to attain it. Success in the direction of a goal brings satisfaction that the life goal brings satisfaction that the life goal, ideal or ambition has been actualised. On the other hand, failure to attain self-actualisation leaves a gap in the life of the individual and remains a source of feeling of non-accomplishment, which many haunt the individual throughout life. Thus, people often take to or engage in the types of work that afford them the opportunity for self-actualisation, although, as already observed above sometimes people fail to find the jobs of their choice through which self-actualisation becomes possible.

Fulfilling a Social Expectation: The society expects an individual to perform a number of functions, which may or may not be pleasing to the said individual. But whether or not the individual likes it, he is often meant to surrender his individuality to the popular will of the society. One social expectation on the individual is to work. Every Nigerian society expects all mature adults to engage in some socially desirable work. Any person who fails to accomplish this expectation is viewed as a misfit. In fact, whenever any crime is committed in the society, the first suspects are usually those without work (Tanner & Tanner, 2003).

The image of the unemployed is often the same all through most of Nigeria. Generally, the image of such people is not enviable. Some describe the unemployed as unproductive, lazy, useless and incompetent. This is particularly true of the able bodied people who have little or no reason to be unemployed. The handicapped persons are more tolerable and often viewed with sympathy. Such handicapped or disabled individuals can and are often expected to earn their living through begging for alms. But it is intolerable in some parts of the country to find able-bodied people begging as a means of livelihood.

The society places so much emphasis on securing or creating jobs by individuals, especially adults that even the handicapped people find productive works to do. In many rehabilitation centres for the blind, deaf and the amputated, serious training is often given to the individuals to equip for independent existence in society. Many of these people learn some arts and crafts such as leather work, raffia work, cane work, to mention but a few. In these rehabilitation centres, for example at Oji River in Enugu State and Uturu-Okejwe in Imos State Nigeria, products of the disabled people can
become employable skilled craftsman. The point being made here is that even a disabled person is expected to work, how much more the able bodied person. To work is therefore an attempt to fulfil a social obligation.

Maintain good Physical and Mental Health: It is necessary to work, among other some other reasons to maintain good physical and mental health. Some types of work involve physical exertion. When the worker engages in such types of work, he undoubtedly exercises his body and feels healthy. When the individual fails to secure any job at all and is unable to engage in any type of self-employment, he is unable to solve his problems. The result is frustration, and this leads to mental and physical ill-health. The psychological worry resulting from joblessness creates mental disharmony for the individual. It is often said that is healthy mind is found in a healthy body. The implication is that if the individual secures a job or engages in any work that affords him the economic security and assurance he needs, that individual is likely to be mentally healthy, a situation that also guarantees for him, physical health. We may now briefly examine the stages in the work of an individual.

Stages in the Work Life of an Individual
There are definite stages in the work life of a person. The duration of each stage differs from one person to another depending on a member of factors. Briefly, the stages include choosing a work, training for the job, maintaining the job, and decline or retirement from job (Ezeji, 2001, MKposi, 1996).

Choosing An Occupation
The choice of an occupation is one of the most difficult decisions students are confronted with. Very often the circumstances surrounding the decision-making process are so complex that the individual is almost at the point of making a mistake. Yet a mistake in choice is often devastating in its psychological consequences on the personality of the individual. There are usually conflicts, which prevail on youths as they begin to make choices of occupation. There are conflicts between an individual’s choice of an occupation and the job his academic qualifications can permit him to do. A person maybe interested in choosing medicine or pharmacy as a profession, whereas his results in the qualifying examinations make it impossible for him to be admitted to study the course of his choice. There may also be conflicts between expectations of the youth and those of the parents. A person may wish to choose fine art as an occupation, while his parents wish him to choose law or engineering. Such conflicts also exist between an individual’s choice and the absence of employment opportunities in the area of choice. In the presence of these conflicts situations, the individual is in a very difficult situation, as a result of which he can find himself in the wrong occupation. Some people also choose occupations without consideration of the physical and intellectual demands of such occupations. In such a case, a person may find himself choosing a job for which he is not well suited. The result of such a situation is predictable possible lack of job satisfaction and frustration. To avert such unpleasant consequence, there is a need for vocational counselling of youths before they can choose life occupations or jobs. Such counselling is necessary for parents to educate them on the need to allow their children, free hand to choose jobs suited to their interest (Nwalado of Uluabia, 2009).

Training for the Occupation:
After one has chosen an occupation either personally or with the help of parents, counsellors or significant others the next step is to train for the said occupation. The purpose of training including the professional ethics required for the occupation. The places for and the duration of training depend on the type of occupation and competencies demanded by the jobs within it.

The training for many occupations begins in the universities or other institutions of higher learning where students are exposed to the necessary theories and practical skills. There are however, other institutions of the secondary school type, which train middle level personnel. Examples are the trade schools or trade centres. These and similar institutions produce the semi-skilled labour force for a country. Some occupations require students to undergo additional training after graduation from institutions of higher learning. This is often necessary because the training institutions may not offer the students all the skills needed for effective performance on the job. This explains why on graduation, medical doctors and pharmacist spend some period of internship in hospitals to gain needed practical experiences.
The duration of training for various jobs varies. Whereas the training period for medical doctors is about eight years, that for teaching, is about four years. The differences in the periods of training are often taken care of in determining retirement benefits (Orngu of Magaji, 2010)

A worker is expected to invest all his energies and devotions to his training. This is necessary if he must become proficient in the work. He can succeed if he adopts healthy attitude towards the said job no matter how difficult it may appear to be. A workers consolation while in training lies in the dividends he hopes to derive from the job on completion of the training. Prior to the training, the vocational counsellor should educate the potential worker on the nature and mode of the work he is going to train for, in order that the individual will successfully complete such training.

Maturing on the Job:
A mature worker is that who has remained on the job successfully for a long period that he has mastered most of his functions effectively in his chosen career. He is that worker who can confidently be left to function in his field of endeavour without fear that he will make many mistakes. Such as fellow can confidently take vital decisions in the interest of his own until of the organisation where he works. He is efficient and effective. It should be the goal of every worker to be mature. This is so because maturity leads to increased productivity. The worker does not attain maturity simply by virtue of his length of stay on a given job. Instead the criteria for job maturity include a person’s mastery of the vital processes necessary for productive functioning, his commitment to the welfare and progress of the job, the degree to which he adheres strictly to the professional ethics of the job, and indeed his overall proficiency (Skills Development Centres (SDC), 2007).

In most cases, the greater an individual increases in professional maturity or competence, the longer he stays on the job. In the same way, he rises in position as his competency increases: Rise in position also leads to pay packet increase. Every worker would wish to reach the top position of his profession or chosen career before retirement. The extent to which this is achieved depends on the degree of professional maturity and competence demonstrated by the individual in the course of his stay on the job. For an individual to successfully remain on his job for as long as is permitted by government legislation, the person must certainly have to abide strictly by the professional or work ethics associated with the said work. It is common knowledge in Nigeria that many workers at all levels hardly stay on their jobs for the maximum stipulated duration of their work life. Wherever there is any panel of enquiry instituted to investigate the activities of any department, ministry or unit, very often, many people are found guilty of one form of misconduct or another. Reports of such acts of misconduct often lead to the dismissal, or in less serious cases, to reassignment, of several persons (Burki & Ubaidullah, 1992).

Given the above observation, it is recommended that occupational counselling programme should also focus on the demands of on-the-job performance. It is indeed necessary for workers to benefit from vocational counselling services which will assist them to cope with several pressures that are concomitants of their jobs, especially those that tend to diminish productivity, commitment, and selflessness, while promoting the conditions conducive to productivity. It will be necessary, for instance, to offer counselling message that discourage dishonest acts among workers, while enhancing work ethics.

Work ethics describe what a worker attitude to work should be. If a worker adheres strictly to the ethics, productivity is enhanced. Briefly the elements of work ethics include the following: punctuality, honesty, diligence, and dedication, courtesy and interest. All workers must be punctual to work. It is a popular saying that punctuality is the soul of business. If workers are punctual to work and remain in their places of work until the official hour of dismissal, the result will be increased productivity of the workers. Every civil servant is expected to begin the day’s work at 8:00 in the morning, and end at 4:00 in the afternoon. National growth and development can definitely be promoted if workers are early to work. Lateness of five minutes by all workers in Nigeria for one day if quantified in financial terms, will amount to millions of Naira. Our nation cannot afford to lose this amount (Ezeji 2001).

Honesty is another vital behaviour expected of workers. Honesty can be demonstrated in a number of ways. These include: keeping accurate financial accounts or accountability, truthfulness, failure to inflate contracts, abiding by any written or oral pledges or oath of office by a worker living up to the ideals of the community. With honesty the slim financial resources of government can be more usefully managed, leading to the greatest good for the greatest number.
Workers must demonstrate diligence and dedication to work. They must put in their very best effort and commitment to their work. Hard work is a most vital virtue that needs to be cultivated by all workers, if Nigeria must boast of any substantial progress.

Courtesy is a behaviour that is very important for workers to demonstrate. It reflects an attitude of politeness, gentility and willingness to serve. It is an expression of humility and respect for the personality of others. Courtesy generates harmony among workers and between workers and the public.

Every worker should demonstrate interest in his/her job. Such interest creates a condition that is conducive to improved performance on the job. Lack of interest, on the other hand, frustrates the worker and makes him fail to put in his best into the job. It is necessary therefore, for workers to condition their minds to developing interest in their jobs (Mkposi, 1996).

Recreation is a very important consideration and activity that is necessary for successful work. A good worker must recreate or have leisure time, which must be effectively utilised. It is often said, “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy”. This highlights the importance of leisure or recreation in one work life. Leisure offers room for relaxation and recuperation needed for greater productivity. Many workers do not seem to appreciate the need for leisure. Some do not also realise the importance of a healthy working environment in the work life of the individual. These are areas where vocational counselling efforts would need to be directed.

Decline or Retirement

It is a well known fact in Nigeria that when any worker has reached the top of his profession or put in the maximum period of time permitted by law into the profession, his productivity begins to decline gradually. The retirement age for civil servants in Nigeria is about 60 years. Thus, at the time a civil servant gets to this age, he should be ready to retire from active civil service and takes to private life. The period of retirement is supposed to be a happy one for the individual as he gladly reflects on the magnitude of his achievement during his, days of active service. But how do many Nigerians perceive the idea of retirement?

Many retiring workers seem to perceive the notice of their retirement as a partial end of their lives. They see it as an indication that they have outlived their usefulness and so could be done away with. They seem to think that it is the worst thing that can befall a serving officer irrespective of his age. But this is unhealthy attitude towards retirement.

Many workers are not usually prepared for retirement. They do not know what to do with themselves on retirement. Many do not plan for this inevitable period of their lives. There is hardly any counselling service in this country geared specially towards accommodating the retirement needs of officers. There is, therefore, an urgent need to direct counselling efforts towards this important period in the life of all Nigerian workers. The content of the guidance programme should include the need to develop a healthy attitude towards retirement, the need to see retirement as an indispensable and necessary stage in the life of every worker, how to prepare or plan for retirement, how to cope with the demands of the period of retirement, how to utilise the period most fruitfully.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

To work is an important requirement for adults in most parts of the world. It is a social expectation on all who have passed through the school system. Various types of work or jobs exist and individuals have various reasons for working. Most people work because they must earn a living. Some work in order to contribute to the development of society, in order to avoid the temptation of engaging in evil plan or socially unacceptable behaviour, for self-actualisation and the likes. There are several stages in the work life of an individual. Generally, people begin by choosing jobs, training for the jobs, remaining and progressing on the job through strict adherence to work ethics and finally retiring. Many Nigerians seem to detest retirement yet it is an indispensable culmination of all the vocational striving of a person. Through proper guidance and counselling programmes, people should be aided not only to learn about jobs, make right choice of jobs, train properly for and remain effectively on the jobs; but also to retire happily from active engagement in their jobs. The above are vital purpose of vocational guidance.
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