

ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS (EPHESIANS 4:28): IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN REDUCING STEALING AMONG NIGERIAN YOUTH

REV. ANYANWU CHARLES ANOZIE (Ph.D)

Department of Religion and Cultural Studies

Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education

PMB 1033, Owerri, Nigeria

+2348037945948, E-mail: charlesanyanya10@gmail.com

&

UZOUKWU CYNTHIA NKECHI (PhD)

Department of Religious Studies

Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria

+2348138393657, Email: mailcynthiauoukwu@gmail.com

Abstract

The world is facing serious economic challenges resulting from population explosion, poor pollution management, economic recession and loss of jobs and businesses due to COVID-19 pandemic. The paper contends that large scale industrial economy can no longer provide jobs for the teeming unemployed and underemployed youth and middle age persons in the world. Consequently, vices are on the rise including stealing. Methodologically, the paper engages the intercultural hermeneutics in the interpretation of the biblical passage of Ephesians 4:28. Furthermore, twenty adult males and females were interviewed using qualitative interview questions to argument the findings from the scripture. Major findings include: Entrepreneurial skills are old time formula for curbing stealing in both ancient and modern societies. Entrepreneurial skills aids in individual national development. Entrepreneurial skills create wealth and happiness. Entrepreneurial skills provide job opportunities for the unemployed thereby reducing stealing in societies. The paper concludes that both government and non-governmental organization should help youth to gain entrepreneurial skills. Institution of learning at all levels should develop entrepreneurial skill acquisition curriculum and workshops.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Skills, Ephesians 4:28, Important Element, Stealing, Nigerian Youth.

Introduction

The world is facing serious economic challenges resulting from population explosion, poor pollution management, economic reasons and loss of jobs and business due to COVID-19 pandemic. The population explosion in Nigeria gave rise to the youthful age majority. In this regard, O'neil (2021) posits that the Nigeria age structure from 2010 to 2020 is 0-14 year is 43.49%, 15-64 years and older is 2.74%. Further in his statistical age chart from 2010-2020 the percentage of the youth population for ten year was not less than 53% conservatively. Since more than half of the population of Nigeria 54% are youth of 15-64 years, the federal states and local governments has got huge responsibilities of using the available statistical data for policy decision and to guide the programmes and their implementation in Nigeria (Kale, 2013). Many of the youth are either not employed or underemployed due to scarcity of jobs

in the country. Large firms and companies cannot absolve many or all of these youth leading to vices such as stealing in Nigeria.

Entrepreneurial skills acquisition therefore, becomes an important element that will empower these youth for creation of jobs, business, happy and healthy wellbeing. Hence, the paper seeks to expose Paul's teaching in Ephesians 4:28 which reads: "Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to him who have need" and apply its lessons to the Nigerian context. Stealing amongst the youth is becoming phenomenal both in the urban and rural spaces in Nigeria. This phenomenal vice stealing require urgent and effective strategy to abate it. That is the reason for this study on entrepreneurial skills for the Nigerian youth.

Conceptual Framework

The study engages in a conceptual framework to show relationship among leaders in the paper and how they relate to the entire research study. In this care therefore, variables are defined for clarity and understanding of the subject matter being discussed.

The first concept to define is entrepreneurial skills. From the document known as indeed career guild (2021) entrepreneurial skills encompass a broad range of various skill sets like technical skills, leadership and business management skills and creative thinking" Since entrepreneurial skills are needing various jobs and business, and entrepreneur needs a variety of these skills to be successful.

From the document "Mindtoos" (2021) we have the information that becoming a successful entrepreneur is not easy, entrepreneur skills are needed to thrive in both large and small businesses. In the new of Pugna, Negru Strauti and Negrea (2021) entrepreneurs with relevant and contemporary entrepreneurial Skills will better need the increasing needs of productivity, flexibility, adaptability which characterize the global market economy. These entrepreneurial skills such as interpersonal skills, critical and creative thinking skills are cognitive structures upon which a successful entrepreneurship is built. Conceptually there to, entrepreneurship skills are necessary cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills required in a successful job and or business venture. They include cognitive skills of creativity, critical thinking, flexibility, affective skill such as passion persistence and resilience and psychomotor skill of technical abilities.

The term "important" in this study denotes thing of great value, significant necessary, crucial, basic and critical. While the term "element" refers to an essential or characteristic part of something (Dictionary of Oxford language, 2021), putting the two term together, important element delineates necessary, critical and essential part of something. In this case entrepreneurial skills are necessary, critical and essential part in the reduction of stealing among Nigeria youth.

To reduce indicates making something smaller or less in degree or amount. It also means to bring someone or something to less desirable state or condition/Dictionary of Oxford languages, 2021). In the direction, reduce refer to bring down, as in extent, amount or degree,

diminish" (The American Heritage College Dictionary, 2004, p.1167). Therefore, reduce means to diminish the amount and degree of something, in this case stealing in the Nigerian society.

The next term that needs to be highlighted in the paper is stealing. Ordinarily stealing needs no definition and or explanation since it has become a societal phenomenon.

The American Heritage College Dictionary (2004:1352) renders stealing "to take the property of another without right or permission". In the same manner, the Merriam Webster thesaurus (n.d) describes stealing as "the unlawful taking and carrying away of properly without the consent of its owner". Stealing is therefore the act and intention of taking somebody or something that belongs to another person or group unlawfully and or without permission.

In Anyanwu and Anyanwu (2012:96), stealing has become a phenomenal challenge facing persons and communities in the present Nigeria. Virtually every type of thing including persons, houses, cars, monks can be stolen; adding that stealing has become institutionalized as a business for the smart ones. In the same direction, the authors discussed causes of stealing which include sociological factors, psychological and spiritual factors.

Furthermore, stealing has taking various names and tags, namely, steal, rob, burgle, OBT, Yahoo plus in Nigeria (Anyanwu and Anyanwu (2012).

The Nigeria youth should be considered in the study owing to the point that they form the target of this paper. Nigeria is the largest Black Country in the world and most populous country in Africa. It is endowed hugely with both human and divine minerals and resources of valued natures, yet one of the poorest geographical entities in the world. From the document, end poverty (2021) Nigeria is the poverty capital of the world with nearly 90 million people in Nigeria living in abject and extreme poverty; which approximately half of Nigerian's total population. The implication of number of poor persons in Nigeria is that millions of youth are poor because unemployment or underemployment. It is therefore farfetched why these unemployed and underemployed youth might get into the unjustifiable vice of stealing. Hence the present study is a clarion call for entrepreneurial skills among the youth in Nigeria in order to reduce the rate of incidents of stealing.

Methodology

The study engages intercultural hermeneutics to interpret the biblical passage of Ephesians 4:28. Simply put, hermeneutics is the science and art of interpretation of biblical text. However, Jonker (2006) has defined hermeneutics as the meta-theoretical reflection on the process of interpretation involving 'self' culture and language. Intercultural hermeneutics bridges the gap between cultural of the biblical text and the modern interpreter's contemporary culture. This is important for communication flow and understanding of the biblical text in modern society and times.

Theoretical Framework

The study on entrepreneurial skills Ephesians 4:28, important element in reducing stealing among Nigerian youth is anchored on social control theory. The society control formulated in 1969 by Travis Hirschi contends that crime such as stealing occur when an individual's ties

the conventional order or normative standard are weak or largely nonexistent. This infers that all persons from birth have negative tendencies that must be checked and controlled by laws, rules and regulations in order to keep society safe. Consequently, therefore, those who fail to bond to societal control mechanisms and up involved in decent or criminal activities such as stealing (Crawford, 2014). Thus when an individual's commitments to society are strong, they individuals tend to stay away from crime and deviant inclinations and behaviors.

Another theoretical framework relevant to this study is the general self-control theory developed by Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi in 1990. The general theory of crime states that crime is thought to occur through the following process.

1. An impulsive personality to
2. Lack of self-control to
3. The withering of social bonds to
4. The opportunity to commit and delinquency to
5. Deviant behaviour (Siegal and McCormick, 2006).

This theory also known as general theory of crime sees crime as a means of obtaining immediate gratification, and the ability to delay such short term desires is associate to self-control which was not properly developed in childhood. This theory is validated by a study done by Baron's (2003) with 400 street youth in Vancouver. The study formed relationship between how self-control and violent behaviour and with low self-control being the most predicting factor for criminality.

Therefore, from these theoretical frameworks reviewed herein in the paper, crime such as stealing is associated bonds, values and morals in the first instance secondly affinity to crime is also predicted by low self-control which is linked to family brought-up. Persons who obey societal rules and keep values are less engaged in criminality such as stealing. Persons who adopt the mechanism of self-control are less likely to commit vices like stealing, thus societal control and self-control are two control mechanisms against stealing and other deviant activities.

Citing the Greek Text of Ephesians 4:28 Transliterated into English

Kleptōn kleptetō mēketi mallon kopiātō ergazomenos chersin agathon agathon ina echē metadidonai o o chreian

Citing the English text of Ephesians 4:28

The thief must no longer steal but must work hard and do what is good with his own hands, so that he might earn something to give to the needy.

Situation of Stealing in Nigeria

In Alili (201782) stealing is defined from section 383 of the Criminal Code of Acts thus "A person who fraudulently takes anything capable of being stolen or fraudulently converts to his own use or to the use of any other person, anything capable of being stolen, is said to steal that thing." This denotes an intent permanently to deprive the owner of the thing of it; it is also an intent permanently to deprive any person who has any special property in the thing of such proper; including an intent to use the thing as a pledge of security; etc. The word

permanently prevents most unauthorized borrowings from amounting to stealing. Stemming from this understanding is that if it is not intended to permanently deprive the owner of the right to the item or property it may not be termed stealing (Alili, 2017).

In the same dimension, Alili (2017) quoting the Nigerian Court of Appeal described armed robbery as stealing plus the use of violence or threat of violence. The crime and vice of stealing is aged in human society Nigeria inclusive. Many reasons are behind the act of stealing including lack, greed, ferocious avarice, genetic inclinations and so on (Obiezu, 2018). In a report by Omolaoye (2021), ex-banker, wife, mother-in-law get 60 years jail term for stealing N21 million from depositors' funds. The trio were convicted and sentenced to 60 years imprisonment by Justice Adekanje Ogunmoye of Ekiti State High Court, Ado Ekiti on 12 – count charge of conspiracy and stealing brought against them by the Ibadan Zonal office of the EFCC. This could be termed a family stealing which was made possible by consolidated conspiracy to perfect the crime.

Another incidence of stealing was reported by the Vanguard of June 15, 2021, of a man, 86 years old stealing maize worth N10,000. The accused known as Buhari Musa who resides at Itanla area of Ado Ekiti is facing trial for stealing at an Ado Ekiti chief magistrates' court. The crime of Mr. Buhari Musa informs the crushing level and degree of biting poverty in Nigeria. The cases of stealing in Nigeria and by Nigerians outside the shores of Nigeria continue to be reported. A Nigerian busted in U.S. for stealing \$800,000 in payroll hacking. The report has it that one Mr. Charles Onus between July 2017 and 2018, obtained over 5,000 company user accounts through a cyber-intrusion technique reported to as "Credential Stiffing." According to a statement on the United State Department of justice website, Mr. Onus was arrested and detained on April 14, in San Francisco where he appeared before the Manhattan federal court New York City (Kabir, 2021).

The endless reports of stealing in Nigeria and by Nigerians are worrisome. The Nation reports of a court sitting in Kasuwan Nama, Jos had sentenced two trader, namely, Ibrahim Musa and Yusuf Aliyu for conspiracy and stealing of mobile phone worth N43,000. News from the Guardian informs that an Ikeja Magistrates' Court on Thursday remanded a 32-year-old man, Afolabi Dada in Kirikiri correctional centre for allegedly robbing a man of his motorcycle worth N230,000 at gunpoint (NAN, 2021). Another report was that Police arrest 6 suspects over car snatching and armed robbery. The police Public Relation officer in the FCT, ASP Mariam Yusuf said that six suspects has been arrested over alleged car snatching and armed robbery in Kubwa and Garki area of the Territory.

Synthesizing the information from these reviews of stealing in Nigerian one observes that the crime of stealing in Nigeria occurs in many forms. Some stealing incidents involved armed robbery, some were without armed. Some stealing activities involved items such as cars, phone while as others consist of consumable items such as maize. In some cases items stolen worth millions, whereas in other cases, items worth less than fifty thousand naira in various degrees of micro and macro specimens. It is worthy of note also that many of practitioners of the stealing incidents cited are young persons except in one case an 86 years old was involved. Therefore, the Nigerian situation and context is appropriate for the application of the findings of this study.

Literary Context of Ephesians 4:28

Literary context of a passage is the text surrounding the text of study. In that case Ephesians 4:28 surrounded by Ephesians 4:25-32 with v. 28 in between. From v 25 to v. 27, Paul advises the members of the Church in Ephesus to engage in practical /Christian living which he continued in verses 29-32.

- Verses 25-27: Do not give place to the devil
- Verses 29-32: Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

Paul advised Christians in Ephesus not to give a place to the devil by putting away lying, anger and wrath. Rather they should speak truth with one's neighbor and do not let the syn go down on their anger.

Then in verses 29-32, the Ephesians should not grieve the Holy Spirit of God through corrupt words from their mouths, exhibition of bitterness, clamour, malice and all evil speaking. Conversely, they ought to be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave them. In that dimension, therefore, verse 28 becomes appropriate link between the passages of verses 25-27 and 29-32. In which Paul condemns stealing and extols entrepreneurial skill.

Socio-Economic Context of Ephesians 4:28

Historically, Ephesus can be found today in and around the country of Turkey. It was a port city for the west coast of Asia during the times of the New Testament. Ephesus was known as the mother city of Asia because of its influence on the political, economic and religious atmosphere of the region. Ephesus had a vibrant economy which brought people from the rural and poor cities to it. The building of the famous temple of Diana (Artemis) for skill in sorcery and magic made it a destination for people from far and near. It was a multi-ethnic and religiously pluralistic society (Yoder, 2003). Similarly, Soper (2015) concurs that Ephesus was a commercial city in Asia Minor (Turday). It had large population as a city on major trade route and the capital city of Roman province of Asia. It had large worshippers of the pagan goddess Diana which made an industry of blacksmiths flourish in Ephesus.

A synopsis of the historical, socio-economic context of Ephesians 4:28 indicated very vividly and strongly the reason why St. Paul spoke to the Ephesian church members to demonstrate what they have learned of Christ. To give no place for the devil since the city of Ephesus was center for religious plurality, especially the temple and worship of Diana. Furthermore, the fact that Ephesus was a huge commercial center and port city made a fertile ground and place for vices such as stealing to occur. Consequently, Paul encouraged the Christians in Ephesians not to steal but work with their hands and to be kind to one another. This forms the background for the interpretation of Ephesians 4:28.

Analysis of Ephesians 4:28

Outline of the verse 28

- (i) Stop stealing v. 28^a
- (ii) Start labouring with your hands v. 28^b
- (iii) Start giving to the needy v. 28^c

Stealing is a crime that those who do not know Christ may indulge in. It is the manifestation of the working of Old man in verse 22 of Ephesians 4. But those who have known Christ as the Lord and Saviour, have put off the conduct of the old man which included but not limited to stealing. Thereto, when one becomes a Christian, he or she stops stealing; stealing is the characteristic of unbelievers and not believers in Christ. Paul's expression to me in the sentence 'let' expresses the concern that the thief that stole should stop stealing and not to continue later. *Klepto* meaning to steal is akin to *kleptes* referring to a thief. Paul was not suggesting that thief should stop stealing rather he allows those that stole to stop stealing no longer. It is complete stopping of stealing by the believer.

Start labouring, working with your hands what is good, Paul tells Ephesian Christians. The term *Kopiao* labour has two meaning (a) growing weary, (b) toiling which is sometimes translated to bestow labour. It is translated by the verb to labour (Vine, 1997, p633). And the word *ergazomenos* working refers to accomplish, doing work, make a living, perform, produce, trade (NAS Exhaustive Concordance, 2021). In the same vein, Mounce (n.d.) explains *ergazomai* to mean to work, be active, accomplish, to trade, traffic, do business, to be engaged in, occupied upon, to acquire, gain by one's labour. The phrase *ergazomenos agathon tais chersin* which denotes working that which is good with his hands forms the fulcrum of the argument in the study.

It describes a change of perspective in the Christian's life. It denotes also a change in practice by the Christian. It supports the believer engaging in entrepreneurial skills to work, do business, to be meaningfully occupied, to accomplish and make gain out of toiling or labouring. The choice of language by St. Paul in *agathon tais chersin* working with his hands what is good is indicative of work ethics. The believer is designed for only *agathon ergazomai* good works. He or she must have stopped stealing, instead, he or she must work good things with the hands.

Entrepreneurial skills are the ability and capacity to work something good with the hands so as to achieve, accomplish, produce and making gain or profit from labour. It can also refer to trading, being active in production of something good and being meaningfully occupied.

Start giving to the needy is another instruction of Paul to those who have embraced Christ in Ephesus then and in Nigeria now. The last part of v. 28^c informs why the Christian must engage in entrepreneurial skills to work out something good in order to have *metadidonai* to impact, share, contribute to needs, to give a part and bestow (Mounce, n.d.). Entrepreneurial skill creates business, produce gains or profits and assist person to contribute in alleviating the needs and suffering of others. Paul was a tent-making (Acts 18:1-4) who helped himself and perhaps others around him with his entrepreneurial skills. No Wonder he is recommending the same empowerment for children in the Lord who are in Ephesus (TOW Project, n.d.). A believer in Christ with entrepreneurial skill will produce goods and services thereby contributing in helping the needy in society as well as becoming a well-adjusted individual in the community.

Causes of Stealing in Nigeria

It has been sufficiently observed in this piece that there are differing degrees of stealing in Nigeria. To Oluwaleye (2021) flatly opined that crimes such as robbery, pilfering, kidnapping and so on have become common place in Nigeria. Furthermore, Oluwaleye (2021) remarked that scholars have linked high crime rate among youths in Nigeria to unemployment. In Oluwaleye (2021) Adebayo (2013) and Kostadis (2017) wrote that there is Chronic unemployment faced by graduate youth in Nigeria from higher institutions. Unemployment is therefore one of the causes of stealing in Nigeria such that persons get involved in what could be called 'petty theft.' It is a known fact that many large manufacturing firms have either not functional or are unable to employ many job seeking young individuals in Nigeria. Many manufacturing companies have closed due to poor patronage in preference to foreign manufactured goods (Oluwaleye, 2021).

It has been equally observed by Adebayo (2013) that youth unemployment in Nigeria is one of the reasons for youth involvement in criminality such as armed robbery. Statistics show that unemployment in Nigeria is 38-5% in the fourth quarter of 2020 (Verrella, 2021). Since more than half of the population of Nigeria is youth, it is obvious therefore that the youth are worst hit by this unemployment. As a result, since the idle brain and hand are the devils' tools, the youth with commitment and bond to social control and self-control engage in crimes as stealing in Nigeria.

Entrepreneurial skills have been identified as avenues of producing entrepreneurs who could transform the Nigerian society technologically, industrially and economically (Ezeanokwasa & Nwachukwu, 2014). Entrepreneurial skills acquisition must be encouraged to enhance development capacities of the youth and means of providing Jobs in Nigeria (Chiekezie, Nzewi & Erhinmwainose, 2016). Additionally, the authors established relationship between entrepreneurial skills and job creation in Benin City, Nigeria (Chiekezie, et al, 2016). As important tool for youth empowerment industrial growth poverty alleviation and creation of gainful employment, Omolumen and Olajide (2017) have encouraged entrepreneurial skills acquisition by Nigerian youth. It is therefore obvious that entrepreneurial skills are important tools in shunning crimes like stealing and creating works and businesses.

Data Analysis and Discussion

This section of the paper dealt with the responses from the respondents that the researchers interviewed for the purpose of gathering information for the study. On that regard, ten adult males and females were interviewed in seven areas surrounding the topic of discussion.

The first question is there unemployment and underemployment in Nigeria? All the persons interviewed said in varying languages that there are alarming rate of unemployment and underemployment in Nigeria. In his own answer, Mr. Keke Kyrian said that there are unemployment and underemployment due to lack of industries and firms. The second question was large industries or firms cannot provide jobs for the young and middle age persons in Nigeria? The answers from the respondents were that the large industries or firms cannot provide enough jobs for those that need jobs. In his personal answer, Okoroafor Vincent said that even the few people they employ are underpaid meaning those that are

underpaid are underemployed. Madumere N.F. added that there are not enough industries to absorb all levels of jobless persons.

In question three the respondents were asked if vices such as stealing are in the increase in Nigeria. To this question, eight persons said yes that vices such as stealing were in the increase because of unemployment, Keke Kyrian added. However, one respondent Amadi I.C. argued that he needed statistical data to take position on the matter. Question four was on whether entrepreneurial skills will help create jobs and business for the unemployed and underemployed in Nigeria. All the respondents said entrepreneurial skill will bring greater income, create employment, boost the economy of Nigeria. While Akinyelu J. Sunday was of the opinion that entrepreneurial skills will help create job and business, he lamented that there is no enabling environment to entrench entrepreneurial skills development in Nigeria. Perhaps Akinyelu J. Sunday should be referring to poor road network and poor power supply etc.

In answering question five which bordered on if entrepreneurial skills will help create wealth and happiness among the citizenry of Nigeria. Majority of the respondents affirmed that entrepreneurial skills will create wealth and happiness because it will create self-confidence and self-reliance added Akingbade Akinloye. Question six which investigated whether government should provide/create entrepreneurial skills acquisition centers for jobless youth had responses from respondents such as with immediate effect according to Okoroafor Vincent; while others said that government should create entrepreneurial skills acquisition centers for youth development and empowerment. Turning to question seven which read – educational institutions should make skills acquisition a requirement for graduation in order to minimize stealing due to joblessness in Nigeria, all the respondents said it is correct and must be made compulsory as it is truly for educational institutions to make skills acquisition a requirement for graduation.

Discussing the findings, Oluwaleye (2021) has linked high crime rate such as stealing to unemployment which is in line with majority of respondents view. Furthermore, Adebayo (2013) said that unemployment in Nigeria is one of the reasons for youth involvement in criminality such as armed robbery. Following on the heel of the above is Ezeanokwasa and Nwachukwu (2014) who agreed with the majority of those interviewed that entrepreneurial skills will provide both jobs, businesses, wealth and happiness for the Nigerian community. In the same manner, Chiekezie, Nzewi and Erhinmwionose (2016) concur with the respondents that there is relationship between entrepreneurial skills and job creation in Benin City, Nigeria. To Chiekezie et al, both private and public sectors should establish entrepreneurial skills acquisition centers which equip and empower youth with relevant skills, attitudes and confidence necessary for being productive in communities. This in agreement with what the respondents said in agreement that educational institutions should establish skill acquisition centers and make skill acquisition requirement for graduation from higher institution.

Implications of Ephesians 4:28 for the youth in Nigeria

The study on entrepreneurial skills Ephesian, 4:28, important elements in reducing stealing among Nigerian youth is timely, and has pertinent implication to the youth in Nigeria. Like

the Ephesian society where there existed stealing, there is also incidents and endemics of stealing in Nigeria and by Nigerians. Paul instructed that those that stole in Ephesus should stop stealing. In the same manner, those who stole in Nigeria should stop stealing. Instead, the Nigerian youth and middle age person must toil and labour, working with their hands what is good. The Nigerian youth must change perspective and attitude to embrace the dignity of labour and enterprise for a progressive and sustainable society. Furthermore, lifting and helping the needy in society is an important element of a progressive society. However, persons can only help others in needy when they have and willing to do God's will Sharing is living.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The paper concludes by recommending that youth in Nigeria who stole should stop stealing and repent from sin of stealing, toiling and laboring *Koprao ergazomenos* working *agathon tais cherson* what is good with their hands which is interpreted in this study as engaging in entrepreneurial skills is an important element in the holistic development of human and natural endearments. With the emergence of COVID 19 pandemic and subsequent lock down in many parts of the world, engagement of entrepreneurial skills remains the fulcrum of socio-economic development of any nation, Nigeria included. Nigeria youth should embrace entrepreneurial skills acquisition and utilization for sustainable economic resonance in Nigeria. The haves should help the have-nots in the Nigeria society. This will help to reduce stealing occasioned by poverty in the Nigerian society.

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