

Strategies for Stimulating Creativity among Retired Persons in Anambra State

Ukwe, U. C.

Department of Home and Rural Economics
Federal Polytechnic, Oko

&

Esimone, C. C.

Department of Music,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Abstract

This paper examined the strategies for stimulating creativity among the retired persons in Anambra State. Specifically, the study identified factors inhibiting creativity in retirees; knowledge and skills needed by retirees for creativity and the appropriate ways of helping retirees develop creative ideas. Eighty retirees were randomly selected for the study. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analysed using mean. The findings reveal seven factors inhibiting creativity in retirees, nine creative knowledge skills required by retirees for creativity and nine appropriate ways of helping retirees develop creative ideas.

Keywords: Retirement, Strategies, Creativity, Ideas, Retiree, Productivity

Introduction

Retirement starts when a person reaches the stated pension age. In Nigeria today, the retirement age is from 60 to 65 years. The number of people aged 60 and above is rising worldwide (Nwagu and Okafor 2008). The World Health Organisation (WHO) (1997) projected that by the year 2020, more than 100 million people in the world will be over 60 years old and two

third will be living in the developing countries. The implication of the above statement is that there will be increase in financial burden on the welfare state (WHO, 2002 & Nelson, 2005).

Retirement according to Esquivel & Hodes (2003) can be characterised by the following: a complete and permanent withdrawal from full employment, a receipt of income

from a private or state pension and a state of mind that determines how the individual perceives him/herself to be retired. These three key characteristics may not happen simultaneously to a person. Some people may have retired from their primary job and are working post retirement jobs in a different job, other people may have completely stopped working with the possibility of no means of earning a living, and nothing doing, because they believe they cannot do anything meaningful outside their original profession, they drift into believing they are retired and therefore are useless; not realizing 'everybody has a seed of creativity somewhere inside them' and therefore can be very creative and useful in other areas other than their former profession. The need therefore to equip these categories of people with necessary skills that would help make them active and productive is of great importance.

Productivity has to do with creating or production of goods. Production is the process and methods that are employed to transform tangible inputs such as raw materials, semi finished goods; and intangible inputs such as ideas and knowledge for the benefit of mankind (Internet source: [www. Businessdictionary.com](http://www.Businessdictionary.com)). Production is the creation of value or wealth by producing goods and services for the benefit of man and

for the economic development of the nation. This implies that production deal with creativity and creativity is the brain child of wealth. When individuals especially the retirees engage in creative skills, their lives are enhanced, and they contribute to the economic development of the nation.

Creativity is the ability to generate and manifest appropriate knowledge and skill that will enable an individual to maximize the resources around him within the limits of his capability. According to Abe, (2006), Creativity is aimed at creating jobs for economic development of a nation and for individuals to becoming better citizens as well as for creation of wealth. Eisner (2002) pointed out that a distinctive feature of creativity is thinking and doing or seeing things differently which leads to a new and a better approach of doing things as well as a breakthrough in entrepreneurial engagements. This as well leads to one becoming the originator of what he or she produces.

This shows that creativity involves two processes: thinking and production. If one has an idea and cannot act on it, it means he is imaginative and not creative. In creativity, one must think and implement his thoughts which are ideas born from his thoughts of what he can do other than what he has

been doing before. When insights are built, set time to implement the ideas; this will entail getting the necessary capital for the implementation, when, where and how to implement those ideas, all these must be considered.

Also improve your ideas by attending conferences and workshops organised by experts on your ideas. This can be achieved by going out of your way to finding training centres that has to do with the skill you want so as to develop your knowledge. Discard negative ideas about entrepreneurship, reject discouragement and focus on the positive side of your ideas. This helps in boosting your creativity ability.

However, one major inhibition that hinders retirees from being creative and implementing their ideas is Fear: Retirees are very afraid to share their creative ideas with people for fear of being stolen and fear of failure. This happens often times but its more dangerous not to share at all or even to implement those ideas. Sharing brings more insight and success to the idea. Therefore share your ideas with trusted friends and people of like minds. Also, implement your ideas, believe it will succeed, and even when it fails, learn from the mistake.

Retirees are also afraid of making changes, but life is all about making changes. Positive changes lead to

positive results in all ventures of life. The ability to accept change in order to produce creative solutions to further problems is a plus to success. Hence retirees must avoid fear.

Creativity development in retirees is very important because it makes one an originator of a work and it makes the originator feel fulfilled and happy that he can do something different. The knowing of doing something different leads to the ability to solve other problems. It also leads to self-esteem and confidence in oneself. It brings about the realization 'I can do better than this' hence it encourages hard work and leads to creation of wealth.

Creative ideas retirees can engage in are as follows:

- They can engage in the making of pastries' such as the making of cake, chin-chin, buns, fish and meat pies and so on.
- They can establish a restaurant or eatery centres where passersby can stop-by for refreshments.
- They can engage in farm work where they cultivate and harvest farm products for public consumptions
- They can engage in mass production of plastic plates, cups, spoons buckets as well as ceramic plates for the larger market.
- They can be contractors or consultants for people depending

on what they have been doing before and what new ideas they have.

- They can engage in the buying and selling of wrappers or sewing materials in a larger quantity, shoes, ready-made wears and so on, and take them to peoples' homes, schools and government offices for sales.
- They can have boutiques or sewing industries; employ specialists in the making of wears and be producing in larger quantities for companies and individuals.
- They can start up crèche, nursery and kindergarten centres where children can be taken good care of while their parents are at work.

Purpose of the study

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the strategies for stimulating creativity among the retirees in Anambra North Senatorial Zone, Anambra State. Specifically, the study identified:

1. Factors inhibiting creativity in retirees
2. Determined issues relating to knowledge and skills needed by retirees for creativity
3. Identify ways of helping retirees develop creative ideas.

Research Questions

The study answered the following research questions

1. what are the factors inhibiting creativity in retirees
2. what knowledge and skills do the retirees require to be creative
3. what ways can retirees be helped to develop creative ideas.

Methodology

Area and design of the study: The area of study was Onitsha in Anambra North Senatorial Zone. This area was chosen because it is a commercial city that comprises of civil servants, business and private workers. It is important because the retirees here can engage in different creative activities to make them active and productive. The design for the research was survey.

Population for the study: The population for the study comprised retired civil servants (government employed persons), private company employees and sole proprietors made of men and women from ages 60 to 65 years. This group retired from 2005 – 2010 in Anambra North Senatorial zone in Anambra State. This zone comprised of layouts which are Omagba layout, Inland town layout, G.R.A. layout, Fegge layout, Awada layout, Odakpu layout and Niger bridge approach layout. The total number of all the retirees in this zone is 410 (Anambra State Pension Board, Awka).

Sample for the study: Sample for the study stood at Eighty (80) retirees from all the layouts in Anambra

North senatorial zone. This was five percent of the population. Hence the population of retirees from each of the seven layouts are 12, 12, 12, 14, 10, 10 and 10 giving a total of 80 retirees.

Instrument for data collection: A 4-point structured questionnaire was developed and used for data collection. It covered the purposes of the study and was based on extensive literature review.

Method of data collection and analysis: Eighty copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents with the help of a three trained research assistants. All the copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and analysed. Statistical mean was used for analysing the data.

Findings of the study

The following findings were made: Six factors inhibiting creativity in retirees.

Table 1. Mean Responses on six factors inhibiting creativity in retirees.

| S/N | Factors inhibiting creativity in retirees | \bar{x} | Remarks |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. | Fear of sharing new ideas and inventions with others | 2.33 | Disagreed |
| 2. | Inability to use new ideas | 2.41 | Disagreed |
| 3. | Government policies that affect setting up of Business such as proprietorship of schools | 4.00 | Agreed |
| 4. | Retirees desiring political appointments and activities | 3.75 | Agreed. |
| 5. | Desire to attain high standard of doing things | 4.00 | Agreed. |
| 6. | Fear of creating novel/original ideas | 3.00 | Agreed |
| 7. | Fear of allowing people tap into their personal Experience. | 4.00 | Agreed |
| 8. | Fear of ridicules and avoidance of failure | 4.00 | Agreed |

Table 1 above revealed that retirees agreed upon six items out of eight that were listed above. They disagreed with items 2 and 4 with mean score of 2.41 and 2.33.

Table 2: Nine factors inhibiting creativity in retirees.

| S/N | Mean responses on knowledge and skills needed by retirees for creativity | \bar{x} | Remarks |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| 1. | Ability to acquire new knowledge | 4.00 | Agreed |
| 2. | Understanding principles that lead to success | 4.00 | Agreed |
| 3. | Generate creative ideas | 4.00 | Agreed |

| | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------|
| 4. | Implement the new ideas | 4.00 | Agreed |
| 5. | Use creative problem solving skills | 4.00 | Agreed |
| 6. | Challenge the conventional ways of doing things | 4.00 | Agreed |
| 7. | Be courageous in using ideas | 4.00 | Agreed |
| 8. | Suspend judgement | 4.00 | Agreed |
| 9. | Creativity must not be constrained by rules and regulations | 4.00 | Agreed |

Table 2 revealed that nine items identified in the study were agreed upon as means of enhancing the retirees' creative knowledge and skills with means score rating of 4.00.

Table 3: Eight ways of helping retirees develop creative ideas.

| S/N | Mean responses on ways of helping retirees develop creative ideas. | \bar{x} | Remarks |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. | Organising seminars, workshops and conferences for retirees on creativity. | 4.00 | Agreed |
| 2. | Helping retirees recognize the potential advantages and ideas through forming associations/cooperative. | 4.00 | Agreed |
| 3. | Helping retirees to change their attitudes and acquire skills through the mass media. | 3.81 | Disagreed |
| 4. | Helping them to let go of negative preconceptions about entrepreneurship. | 3.75 | Agreed |
| 5. | Seeking new and relevant ideas for given situations of individual retiree. | 4.00 | Agreed |
| 6. | Helping retirees put creative ideas into action. | 4.00 | Agreed |
| 7. | Establishing training centres for retirees where they can learn new skills. | 4.00 | Agreed |
| 8. | Helping retirees focus on skills for problem solving in their environment. | 4.00 | Agreed. |

Table 3 showed the mean responses of the retirees on ways of helping retirees develop creative ideas. The retirees agreed with the eight items enlisted with mean score rated 2.50.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the study showed that six factors inhibit creativity in the retirees. These are Government policies that affect setting up of businesses, retirees desiring political appointments and activities, the

desire to attain high standard of doing things, fear of initiating original ideas, fear of allowing people tap into their personal experience and fear of failure and ridicule. All these points were accepted by retirees as their reasons for not being creative and productive. Looking at all the outlined points, fear was the undertone of the reasons. Gray, (1987) defined fear as 'a subjective emotion that triggers physiological changes that has antecedents in the environment, leading to certain causal consequences in behaviour'. And these causal consequences according to Barlow (2000) are seen in avoidance behaviours. In order words, the individual who is threatened by fear engages in the avoidance behaviours out of the belief that such behaviours will prevent the unpleasant outcome that is feared. To solve this problem of fear, Sagar, Lavellee and Spray (2003) believed retirees requires to discard the thoughts of fear each time it shows up and to remain focussed in achieving their goals.

More so, the retirees needs orientation where the problems and reasons listed above could be dealt with, which could be in workshops and seminars organised by elites with understandings of their predicaments.

Also, the result of the findings show that the retirees agreed with all

the stated points in table two on knowledge and skills needed by retirees for creativity; and they agreed with majority of the points raised on helping retirees develop creative ideas as seen in the tables above. The implication of these findings is that information and a good management of that information is very necessary. Knowledge management is 'an emerging set of principles that govern organisational and business process design, as well as specific processes, applications and technologies that help knowledge workers dramatically leverage their creativity and ability to deliver business value' (Gurten 1998). When people are well informed over an issue as in this study, their attitudes changes for the better which is what is this paper is set to achieve.

Conclusion

This work revealed much on creativity and productivity. Showing very clearly the importance of creativity and how important it is for everyone to be very creative especially the retirees. Hence creativity as explained by Gurten (1998) is about the generation of ideas and the application of the conceived ideas, it is therefore of great importance for retirees to be productive and resourceful. This no doubt will help them develop in their standard of living as well as

add to the economic development of the nation. They must also avoid the pitfalls of allowing fear hinder the implementation ability of their ideas hence they should adhere to all the suggested ways in this paper which will help them be creative and productive.

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