

# Framework for Codification of Informal and Non-Formal Knowledge and Skills in the Formal Education System in Nigeria

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## Abstract

Formal education is provided for a segment (children and adolescents) of the society. While workers in the formal sector enjoy professional and continuing education; those in the informal and non-formal sectors of the economy do not have any opportunity of taking part in any form of adult education. Many artisans, professionals and artists display dexterity in their various callings. This act of display may sometimes refer to as tacit knowledge, that is, knowledge that may be difficult to codify except through training of adult learners. If this group of people is not catered for in terms of adult learning, it may be difficult for them to make contributions to economic growth in the society. Therefore, the study entitled “Framework for Codification of Informal and Non-Formal Knowledge and Skills in the Formal Education System in Nigeria” is embarked upon. The purpose of the study is to identify and discuss framework for codification of knowledge and skills in the informal and non-formal sector; and to establish the probable benefit that may be derived from codification of knowledge and skills of informal and non-formal learners. The study was carried out using qualitative and quantitative approaches. Some artisans, professionals and artists were interviewed, using focus group discussion. Respondents were enthusiastic on codification of their knowledge and skills and award of appropriate certificates. Some of the framework identified in the study include: organising literacy competence to complement the tacit knowledge of the recipients; sensitisation of members of the public by the NNCAE; and collaborative efforts between NUC and departments of adult education in universities.

**Keywords:** Formal education, non-formal, informal, codification, knowledge and skills

## 1. Introduction

The key to 21<sup>st</sup> century is Adult and Non-Formal Education. Hamburg declaration on Adult Learning (1997) states that: It is both a consequence of active citizenship and a condition for full participation in society. It is a powerful concept for fostering ecologically sustainable development, for promoting democracy, justice, gender equity, and scientific, social and economic development, and for building a world in which violent conflict is replaced by dialogue and a culture of peace based on justice. Adult learning can shape identity and give meaning to life. Learning throughout life implies a rethinking of content to reflect such factors as age, gender equality, disability, language, culture and economic disparities.

Formal education is provided for a segment (children and adolescents) of the society. While workers in the formal sector enjoy professional and continuing education, those in the informal sector of the economy do not have any opportunity for any form of Adult Education. It is on record that many artisans, professionals and artists display dexterity in their various callings. This act of display may sometimes refer to as tacit knowledge, that is, knowledge that may be difficult to codify except through training of adult learners. If this group of people is not catered for in terms of adult learning, it may be difficult for them to make contributions to economic growth in the society.

Perhaps, that is why Hamburg declaration earlier quoted views adult learning throughout life as a way of bridging the disparity between the formal and informal learning in order to capture everybody in the Society. According to Werquin (2010), the labour market, whether formal or informal is a place for the production of non-formal and informal learning situation. The learning situation occurring in these sectors are not codified or recognised either by employers of labour or government organisations.

Presently, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity provides opportunities for certain artisans such as mechanics, plumbers and carpenters and so on, to obtain trade test certificates in their various professional groupings. This is not enough because not all of them are captured in this codification exercise. The codification of knowledge and skills being advocated for in this paper may not necessarily meant for the purpose of gainful employment in the formal sector but to enhance the performance of recipients and uplift their self esteem in the society. Therefore, the paper entitled “Framework for Codification of Informal and Non-Formal Knowledge and Skills in the Formal Education System in Nigeria” is embarked upon for the purpose of advocating for codification of people not captured in the formal sector. Towards this end, the objectives of this paper include:

- To identify and discuss framework for codification of knowledge and skills in the informal and non-formal sector.
- To interact with members of the public with a view to seeking their opinion on codification of knowledge and skills of informal and non-formal learners.
- To assess the perception of members of the public on the probable benefit that may accrue to codification of knowledge and skills of informal and non-formal learners.

Arising from these objectives, the following research questions are generated.

- What form of framework can be used for codifying knowledge and skills in the informal and non-formal sector?
- How would member of the public feel concerning the codification of knowledge and skills of non-formal and informal learners?
- What benefit can be derived from codification of knowledge and skill of informal and non-formal learners?

## 2. Literature Review

### *2.1 Mechanics’ Institutes: Precursor for recognition and codification of workers’ skills in Britain*

The origin of Mechanics’ Institute is attributed to Dr. George Birkbeck, who in 1799 gave a series of free lectures for the working men of Glasgow ([www.pmi.net.au/home/mihistory](http://www.pmi.net.au/home/mihistory); and [home.vicnet.net.au/~mivic/history-of-mechanic-institutite.html](http://home.vicnet.net.au/~mivic/history-of-mechanic-institutite.html)) By Mechanic, this is referred to as artisan, tradesman or workingman. The lectures were provided free of charge to workers, and this made it popular because formal education was provided to the wealthy and clergymen in the society at that time. As time goes on, the lectures led to facilities dedicated to workers’ education (a branch of Adult Education) provided at Edinburgh School of Arts (1821) and the London Mechanics’ Institute (1823). In no distant time, the Mechanics’ Institutes were established throughout Britain and its Colonies including Canada, New Zealand, America and Australia.

Mechanics’ Institute gave skilled working men education for life and work, providing lectures, classes, libraries and even museums (Abbott, 1861). The ideals preached by the founders include self-improvement, self-discipline, class cooperation and cultural egalitarianism. Mechanics’ Institute of Victoria Inc (2016) reports that Mechanics’ Institute served as centre of adult education and hub for social and cultural activities. Stephens (1964) opines that the attendees of Mechanics’ Institute became elevated in the society and more respected as valuable artisans and influential citizens in the community.

One can observe that, as far back as 18<sup>th</sup> century, workers and artisan were regarded as valuable people whose skill and knowledge must be developed and recognised for the advancement of the society. While elitist education was provided for clergy men and highly placed people in the society, Mechanics’ Institute focused on the development of workers and artisan who constituted larger percentage of the people in the society. The effort of Mechanics’ Institute serves as harbinger of recognition and codification of knowledge and skills of workers as being advocated in this paper.

## **2.2 Concepts of Codification of Knowledge**

The concept of codification according to dictionary refers to arrangement of things, especially laws, rules or principles into an organised system or code. The Offline Thesaurus Dictionary looks at codification from different perspectives. It considers it to be a categorisation, law of government, classification, arrangement, organisation, managing course of action and hypothesis. Also, it is seen as belief, book of laws such as codified law, law book, legal code, statute law, written law. The [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com) sees codification as the act, process or result of arranging in a systematic form or code. Codification is also conceived as the act, process, or result of stating the rules and principles applicable in a given legal order to one or more broad areas of life in this form of a code; and the reducing of unwritten customs or case law to statutory form.

Codification of knowledge and skills as used in this paper refers to the recognition given to knowledge and skills of people who possess such through non-formal and informal means with the purpose of issuing appropriate certificate (Certificate or Diploma or Degree) to validate such knowledge and skills. It also means setting principles, procedures and guidelines in form of framework which guide the process of validating knowledge and skills of artisans by institutions of higher learning, especially the university. This kind of codification may be for employment and self-employment purposes. Eraut (2000:113) refers to codified knowledge as a public knowledge or propositional knowledge that is subject to control by editors, peer review and debate; and given status by incorporation into educational programmes, examination and courses.

## **2.3 Formal Education System**

Formal education system in any part of the world takes place in a structured environment, with rigid curriculum, structured learning processes; and rules and regulations are laid down for students, teachers and other workers to follow. The period of study in the formal system of education is chronologically graded running from primary school through the university and including general academic studies and other specialised programmes.

Eraut (2004) observes that it is the work of students that is structured and not the learning. According to the scholar, element of informal learning has been observed in or near formal education settings. Sedita (2003) says that formal learning is a way of transferring explicit knowledge. The author notes that formal education is:

Learning provided by an education or training institution, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and leading to certification. Formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective.

## **2.4 Informal Learning**

Informal learning is one of the areas focussed in adult education. It is a kind of learning that is flexible in nature because it can take place anywhere, anytime and can be received by any age group without compulsion. Eraut (2004) opines that it is a form of education that recognises social significance of learning from other people and as a complimentary partner to learning from experience. Besides, Sedita (2003) views informal learning as a way for transferring tacit knowledge. Similarly, Sedita (2003:15) observes that informal learning is:

Learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and typically does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but in most cases it is non-intentional (or "incidental"/ random).

Besides, Mairesse (2006) opines that learning happens nearly all the time in daily life (at home, on the street, in cafes etc.) but it is not a planned activity.

## **2.5 Non-formal Learning**

Non-formal learning ordinarily may be assumed to be the opposite of formal learning; that is learning that is flexible, non-rigid, non-graded and taking place in a non-structured environment. However, the work of Eraut (2000) made us to realise that non-formal learning needs critical explanation before it can be well understood. According to Eraut, one may be tempted to look at non-formal and informal learning to mean the same thing. Nonetheless, informal learning is treated as a residual category to describe any kind of learning which does not take place within, or follow from, a formally organised learning programme or event. The adult educators believe that human learning occurs not only in formal education, but also in other settings. Then, one should note that the term informal learning may be associated with other things such as dress, discourse, behaviour and other social situations. Consequently, Eraut (2000) conceives non-formal learning as propositional knowledge. In other words, non-formal learning incorporates implicit learning that gives rise to tacit knowledge, as well as relative learning which is near-spontaneous and unplanned, and deliberative learning for which time is set aside. However, Sedita (2003:15) opines that non-formal learning is not provided by educational institutions alone. The scholar writes:

Learning that is not provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. It is, however, structured (in terms of learning objectives). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective.

Dehnbostel (2006) conceives non-formal education as:

- like formal learning, is organised and planned but it takes place outside the public education system and is not recognised; and
- usually takes place in the work and living environment and not the institutions of the public education system, contrary to formal learning.

Non-formal education, as far as we are concerned, in this part of the world is seen as a mode or means of acquiring knowledge and skills. It is planned, organised and can take place in formal education setting. The same certificates are issued to those who use formal and non-formal modes of learning. All these certificates are recognised through the mechanisms put in place by the government. However, it should be noted that if such non-formal learning is organised by bodies not recognised by the government, certificate issued from such places will not be recognised in the society. This is why this study is very important in order to address this kind of anomaly. Eraut (2000:126) presents skill acquisition designed by Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986). *This is presented in Table 1.*

**Table1. Summary of Dreyfus model of skill acquisition**

Level	Types	Features
1	Novice	i. Rigid adherence to taught rules or plans. ii. Little situational perception. ii. No discretionary judgement.
2	Advanced Beginner	i. Guidelines for action based on attributes or aspects (aspects are global characteristics of situations recognisable only after some prior experiences) ii. Situational perception still limited. ii. All attributes and aspects are treated separately and given equal importance.
3	Competent	i. Coping with large crowd. ii. Now sees actions at least partially in terms of longer term goals. ii. Conscious deliberate planning. iv. Standardised and routinized procedures.
4	Proficient	i. See situations holistically rather than in terms of aspects. ii. See what is most important in a situation. ii. Perceives deviations from the normal pattern. iv. Decision making less laboured. v. Uses maxims of guidance, whose meaning varies according to the situation.
5	Expert	i. No longer relies on rules, guidelines or maxims. ii. Intuitive grasp of situation based on deep tacit understanding. ii. Analytic approach used only in novel situations, when problems occur or when justifying conclusions. iv. Vision of what is possible.

**Source:** Eraut, M. (2000). Non-formal learning and tacit knowledge in professional work, *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 70, 113-136 [www.old.mofet.macam.ac.il..mechkar.pdf](http://www.old.mofet.macam.ac.il..mechkar.pdf). Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2016.

## 2.6 Framework for Codification of knowledge and skills

Many artisans, professionals and artists in the non-formal sector of the economy display dexterity in their various callings. Unfortunately, what people who patronise formal education system enjoy in terms of validation of and acquisition of certificates related to their knowledge and skills is not enjoyed by those who possess informal and non-formal knowledge and skills. Cedefop (2000) opines that validating non-formal and informal learning is increasingly seen as a way of improving lifelong and life wide learning of people. Validating knowledge and skills, according to Cedefop (2000) involves validation processes orientation, assessment and external audit.

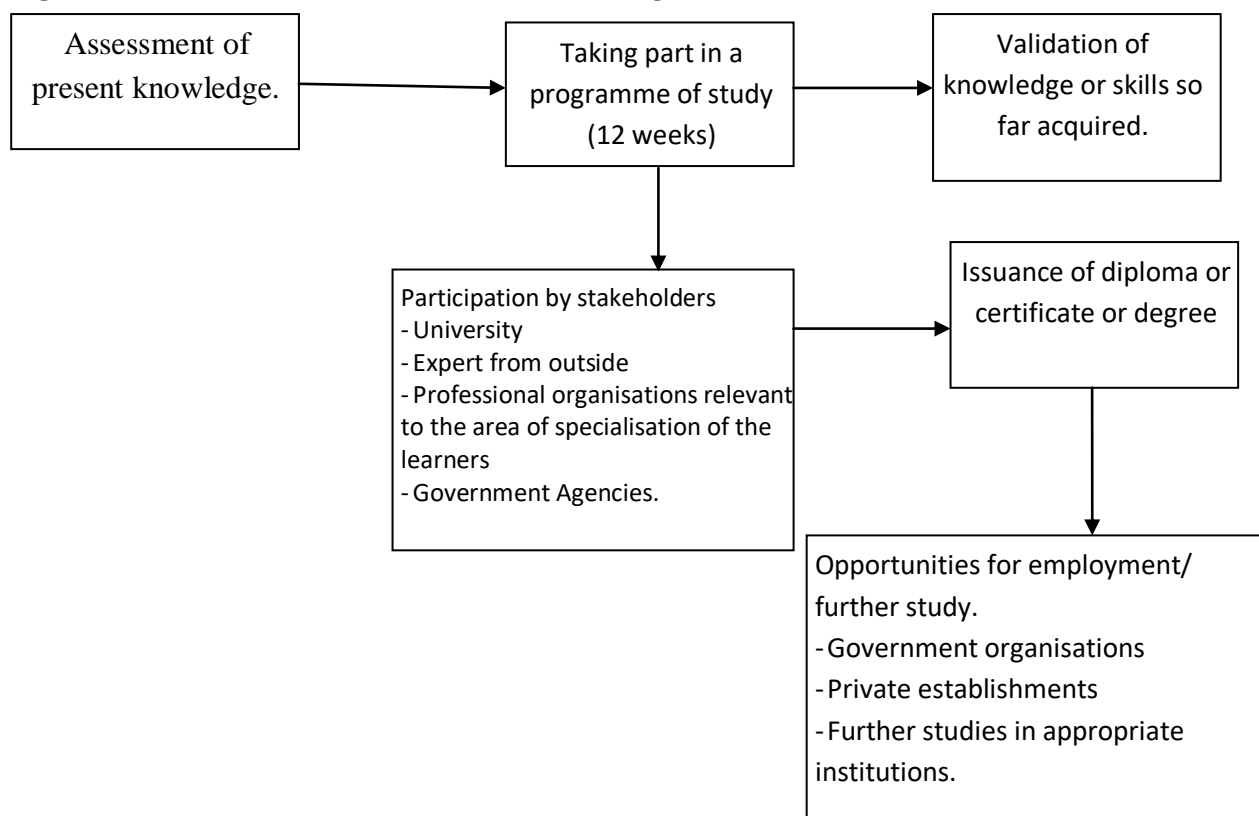
Furthermore, Hamburg declaration (1997) notes:

There are now older people in the world in relation to the total population than ever before, and the proportion is still rising. These older adults have much to contribute to the development of society. Therefore, it is important that they have the opportunity to learn on equal terms and in appropriate ways. Their skills and abilities should be recognised, valued and made use of.

In addition, Mazza (n.d) underscores the need for learning experiences to be valued in order to improve human condition. This can be done through the award of certificate and validation of competencies and skills, irrespective of the time or place where they were acquired. (Mairesse, 2006). Similarly, Martens (2006) describes validation as a means of accessing informally and non-formally acquired learning outcomes and competencies.

Furthermore, Eur-lex (2012), Cameron and Harrison (2012) and Steenekamp and Singh (2012) stress the need for recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the society. Recently, European Commission (2016) opines that validation of non-formal and informal learning is a way of recognising the full range of an individual's knowledge, skills and competencies, regardless if acquired within or outside the formal education system. If validated (identified, documented, assessed and or certified), these learning experiences can be made more visible and usable for further studies or work.

**Figure 1: Process of Codification/Validation of Knowledge and Skills of learners/artisans.**



Source: The authors

**Figure 1.** emphasises the need for the assessment of previous skills possessed by the learners before undertaking any programme in the university setting. Assessment of skills may involve various stakeholders. This is to ensure where new skill acquisition would begin as presented in **table 1**. All the other steps presented are stated in **figure 1**.

### 3. Methodology

The study adopted exploratory approach. According to Davies (2006) exploratory research is primarily concerned with discovery and generating or building theory. Exploratory research often relies on secondary research such as review of available literature and /or data, or qualitative approaches such as information discussion, in-depth interview, focus groups, projective methods, case studies or pilot studies. Accordingly, some artisans and other

professional groups were interviewed in order to obtain their views on codification of knowledge and skills. Their views are presented under the analysis of result.

#### 4. Analysis of Results.

Answers to the research questions generated under introduction are presented in this section. These three research questions are subdivided into nine. This is contained in appendix 1.

**Research Question 1:** What form of framework can be used for codifying knowledge and skills in the informal and non-formal sector?

In answering this question, some artisans and professionals were interviewed

Interviewee No. 1

Name: Mr. Ogunode Ademola a.k.a Machine Original

Town: Akungba Akoko, Ondo State.

Type of Vocation: Motor Mechanic

Academic Qualification: SSCE, 1983.

He says as follows:

I will be extremely happy to have the opportunity to participate in any course of study, say 12 weeks in order to obtain certificate from any institution so that my knowledge of mechanic will be upgraded. Whatever certificate given, I will take it with joy, laminate and hang it in my workshop. Obtaining the certificate from the University will enable member of the public to recognise it. If I don't use it for looking for job, society will respect me. After obtaining the certificate from the university, I will advise the government to back it up with loan that will be repaid back to them in not less than two years. The money obtained through the loan will be used to equip my workshop so that I will be able employ others.

Interviewee No. 2

Name: Mr. Osho Odunayo

Town: Akungba Akoko, Ondo State.

Type of Vocation: Vulcaniser

Academic Qualification: Primary Six Certificate

Our interaction with him is recorded as follows:

I am leaving in Akungba where there is a University. So participating in any university programme will be easier for me. For those of us who are having primary six certificates, spending six months in the programme to upgrade our skill will not be too much. The certificate obtained will be useful in seeking job in government establishments. If I am working on my own, the certificate will make me proud of my job. I want the University to let the public know that our knowledge and skills have been recognised. By this, they will not look down on us.

Interviewee No.3

Name: Mrs Segun Bose

Town: Akungba Akoko, Ondo State.

Type of Vocation: Hairdresser

Academic Qualification: SSCE

She says:

I am ready to participate in any course of study in higher institution of learning. Whatever certificate I obtain will be useful for me and I will be proud of it. It will be good if knowledge and skills I have in hairdressing profession is recognised and codified and certificate or diploma is issued. In fact, to recognise our profession with the award of certificate from university, I will be very happy. I will advise the government to let the members of the public know that my profession is recognised and codified.

Interviewee No. 4

Name: Mr. Kareem Waidi (a.k.a E ra eran, e bu obe.)

Town: Akungba Akoko, Ondo State.

Type of Vocation: Meat Seller (Butcher)  
Academic Qualification: SSCE

The interviewee reveals as follows:

I will like to participate in any programme that will increase my knowledge in my profession. I will accept the certificate with great appreciation. If it requires payment to the institution for me to participate in the programme, I will pay it. I will prefer taking part in the course to upgrade my knowledge and obtain certificate. This will enable cow butchers to be respected in the society. I will advise the government to let the public understand that not everybody must go to the university and spend many years before they are recognised in the society.

Interviewee No. 5

Name: Mr. Omolayo

Type of Vocation: Motor Electrical Rewire

Town: Akungba Akoko, Ondo State.

Academic Qualification: SSCE, 1983; and Grade III Trade Test.

His responses are as follows:

I will be very happy if I have the opportunity of participating in any programme either in the university or polytechnic. At the end, I will be happy to obtain diploma or certificate. This certificate will be an added advantage to my Grade III trade test which I obtained from the Federal Ministry of Labour. It is highly recommended to recognise our profession by giving us certificate or diploma so that members of the public will attach importance to our profession. After participating in such programme, I want government to give us loan to establish our businesses. This is because we are too old to look for government job.

### **Discussion**

A number of things can be observed from responses of the respondents. For instance, they were interested in taking part in any training programme which may last for some weeks. The respondents were ready to pay fees in order to participate in the programme. This is to show the importance attached to such educational ventures. The respondents want members of the public to be involved by letting them know that institutions are in place where knowledge and skills of non-formal and informal learners are recognised (UNESCO 1997). In other words, involvement and sensitisation of members of the public may be part of the framework for codification of knowledge and skills of informal and non-formal learners.

**Research Question 2:** How would member of the public feel concerning the codification of knowledge and skills of non-formal and informal learners?

In order to answer this question, the researchers had interactions with the members of the public.

Interviewee No. 1

Name: Mr. Ibrahim Oyewumi

Town: Osogbo, Osun State.

Type of Vocation: Trader

Academic Qualification: SSCE

He says as follows:

I don't have any certificate to show that I am a trader. If I am asked to come to a university where I will spend some months, even if it is three or six months, I will appreciate the institution. We will be able to see many things and project into the future concerning our trade. People wouldn't say we traders don't know anything.

Interviewee No. 2

Name: Mr. Ahmed Yinus

Town: Osogbo, Osun State.

Type of Vocation: Panel Beating.

Academic Qualifications: SSCE, NCE (in view) and Grades I and II Trade Test.

He reveals as follows:

I will be very happy to participate in any programme organised by any university. Whatever certificates obtained will enable me to get more jobs from government establishments.

Interviewee No. 3

Name: Mr Ahmada Rufai Abdul-Kareem

Town: Osogbo, Osun State.

Type of Vocation: Arabic Teacher and Driver.

Academic Qualification: Primary Six and Drivers' license.

His narrations are as follows:

I will be very happy to participate in any programme organised by the university so that people will not look down on Arabic teachers as illiterates. Members of the public will respect Arabic teachers whenever they preach in the public. Also, members of the public will be enthusiastic to bring their children and wards to any centres established by such people

### Discussion

One observes that members of the public interacted with were enthusiastic and looking forward to a time when an institution would organise training programme. This arrangement would enable them to be conscientised as regards their rights and duties in the society. One also notices that they are likely to have self-fulfilment, increased self-esteem and ability to perform well in the society in any vocation.

**Research Question 3:** What benefits can be derived from codification of knowledge and skill of informal and non-formal learners?

In answering this question, some artisans and professionals were interviewed

Interviewee No. 1

Name: Mr. Ibrahim Oyewumi

Town: Osogbo, Osun State.

Type of Vocation: Trader

Academic Qualification: SSCE

He says as follows:

I am a Trader. Trading needs knowledge of certain skills. There is difference between buying, selling and marketing and acting as manufacturers' representative. If one doesn't have trading skill, one may be running trade at loss. Therefore, obtaining relevant qualification from university will help traders greatly. Traders would have the opportunity of learning about marketing strategy that will enable one to excel than others. If codification exercise is done, it will enable participant to pay certain tax to the government through their trading. By this, they will be making contribution to the economic growth of the society.

Interviewee No. 2

Name: Mr. Ahmed Yinus

Town: Osogbo, Osun State.

Type of Vocation: Panel Beating.

Academic Qualifications: SSCE, NCE (in view) and Grades I and II Trade Test.

He reveals as follows:

Organising training programme for non-formal and formal learners will motivate other artisans and professionals to participate because of the dignity they would receive at the end of the programme. It will afford the participants the opportunity of self-employment, without looking for government job. Also, they will be able to work in government



establishments. Government should establish vocational centres for all categories of artisans in their locality. This would enable them to contribute their quota to the progress and economy of the society, like it is done in overseas.

Interviewee No. 3

Name: Mr Ahmada Rufai Abdul-Kareem

Town: Osogbo, Osun State.

Type of Vocation: Arabic Teacher and Driver.

Academic Qualification: Primary Six and Drivers' license.

His narrations are as follows:

There is dearth of Arabic and Islamic teachers in our schools. This will provide opportunity for people to be employed as Arabic teachers in primary and junior secondary schools. The Arabic teachers are not happy with non-provision of teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies in our schools. In addition, people will accord respect to such people and members of the public will know that his knowledge and skill has been recognised through the award of certificate. Those whose knowledge has been codified by the university should be receiving something in form of motivation (cash or kind) on some occasions.

Interviewee No. 4

Name: Mr Jamiu Bamidele

Town: Osogbo, Osun State.

Type of Vocation: Bricklaying

Academic Qualification: SSCE.

His opinion is revealed as follows:

Everybody wants progress. But when there is no means, one will become incapacitated. Providing the opportunity to attend a university for any programme would provide freedom and emancipation from suppression and cheating. The award of certificate to the participant could be based on the evaluation of skills already possessed before coming for the programme. In other words, the result of evaluation of skill may lead to the award of certificate or diploma or degree as the case may be. Anyone who participates in such programme will have confidence to relate with government workers in order to get employment or obtain contract. Society's recognition will be accorded to anyone who possesses such qualification.

## Discussion

The respondents were of the view that codification of skills of non-formal and informal learners will help the society in the area of payment of taxes and by increasing the number of people who have knowledge and skill and who are ready to contribute to the growth of the society. The respondents are also advocating the establishment of vocational centres which would take care of various artisans in various localities. This is likely to promote entrepreneurship and going a long way in solving unemployment plaguing the society.

## 5. Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made.

- The Departments of Adult Education in our universities should explore the means of organising training programme for informal and non-formal learners with a view to codifying and recognising their skills which would attract award of relevant certificates. This will go a long way in increasing the number of literates, entrepreneurs and solving unemployment problem. It will also improve revenue generation in universities.
- There is the need for collaborative effort among National Universities Commission (NUC), departments of adult education in our universities, Federal Ministry of Education and National Educational Research and Development Council of Nigeria to work together with a view to evolving framework for evaluation and codification of skills of non-formal and informal learners in Nigeria.
- It is high time that vocational centres are established in all the localities in order to provide avenue where artisans would work after graduation from such codification programme. This would help to solve unemployment problem and improve the livelihood of people in the society.
- Any codification exercise must carry along members of the public by sensitising them on the need for and the benefit that can be derived from codification exercise.

- It is true that members of the public who will be participating in codification exercise in the universities would make financial contribution, there is still the need to make adequate budget on the part of government and participating universities.

## 6. Conclusion

Thus far, the respondents were enthusiastic on codification of their knowledge and skills and award of appropriate certificates. Some of the framework identified in the study include: organising literacy competence to the participant; sensitisation of members of the public; collaborative effort among stakeholders in education industry; and establishment of vocational centres for informal and non-formal learners after graduation. This will go a long way in solving unemployment problem in the country and improve internally generated revenue of universities in Nigeria.

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