

**ENABLING AND STIMULATING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN
HIGHEER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: CATALYST FOR VENTURESOME
YOUTHS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT: *Entrepreneurship is increasingly being recognized as a significant conduct for bringing about a transformation to sustainable products and processes, with numerous high-profile thinkers advocating entrepreneurship as a panacea for many social and environmental concerns. Yet, despite the promise entrepreneurship holds for fostering sustainable development, there remains considerable uncertainty regarding the nature of entrepreneurship's role in the area, and the academic discourse on sustainable development within the mainstream entrepreneurship literature has to date been sparse. While entrepreneurs have long been recognized as a vehicle for exploiting emerging opportunities associated with societal need, we have little understanding of how entrepreneurs will discover and develop those opportunities that lie beyond the pull of existing markets. Thus, while the case for entrepreneurship as a panacea for transitioning towards sustainable development society-wide is valid, there exists major gaps in our knowledge of whether and how this process will actually unfold. This paper focuses on: (i) Factors that challenge the teaching of entrepreneurship education within the Higher Education Institutions to engender sustainable development and venturesome youths; (ii) Strategies to employ in addressing these challenges. Factors that Challenge the Teaching of Entrepreneurship Education in Higher Education Institutions; (iii) Imperatives and outcomes of entrepreneurship education and the state of entrepreneurship education in Higher Education Institutions.*

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education, Venturesome Youths Sustainable Development, Higher Education Institution

INTRODUCTION

The world is experiencing one of the most extraordinary periods in history. The power equation continue to shift across countries and regions while rapid changes unfold in the marketplace reshaping both the political landscape and the interactions between governments and businesses. The financial crisis, coupled with rising inflation and the consequent lull in global demand, has engendered significant insecurity about the outlook of the world economy and increased anxiety about its potential implications on the accomplishment of the Millenium Development Goals by 2015. However, it is in difficult times when the power of collaboration bears fruit, helping us better understand the challenges we face and encouraging us to unleash our imagination and capitalize on the opportunities ahead. Entrepreneurship and education are two such extraordinary opportunities that need to be leveraged and interconnected if we are to develop the human capital required for capacity and capability building country wide. Entrepreneurship is the engine fuelling innovation, employment generation and economic growth. It is the necessary lubricant that oils the wheel of progress economy-wide. Thus, it is only by creating an environment where entrepreneurship can prosper and where entrepreneurs

can try new ideas and empower others can we ensure that many of the world's issues will not go unaddressed. Equally important is the power that education has in developing the skills that generate an entrepreneurial mindset and in preparing future leaders for solving more complex, interlinked and fast-changing problems. Education needs to come back to the top of the priorities of governments and the private sector and be seen as the fundamental mechanism for attaining sustainable economic development and societal advancement. More than ever, the world needs effective global leaders and stronger educational systems that prepare the current and future generations of entrepreneurs, workers, teachers, managers and individuals with the skills needed to succeed and help others. The need for entrepreneurship education started emerging in the mid 1980s. This is because before this period, unemployment and poverty were not a national concern as it is currently. However, political instability, policy shifts, policy reversals, policy somersault and consistently inconsistent gamut of social and economic policies of successive government led to the emergence of high level unemployment in Nigeria. In the mid 80s, the Nigerian economy collapsed, while youth and graduate unemployment was on the high side. There was large-scale layoff of workers and early retirements as a result of structural adjustment policies and bad economic trends in the country. In the face of this situation, entrepreneurship, which would have salvaged the situation, was not encouraged.

It has been observed that tertiary education has not been properly included in the philosophy, of self-reliance such as creating a new cultural and productive environment that will promote pride in primitive work and encourage people to take part actively in entrepreneurial activities and participate actively in discussions and decisions affecting their general welfare while promoting new sets of attitudes and cultural values for the attainment of future challenges. Oluwasanya (2013) opined that the failure of higher education institutions to institutionalize and inculcate venture-some and enterprising behaviour in undergraduates has led to wastages in terms of both human and natural resources. To be enterprising is to keep your eyes open and your mind active. It is having a paradigm shift, requisite skills, confidence, creativity, passion and possibility mentality to create and seize business opportunities so as to translate into new venture creation and new products or services to the market. This is because the youth and graduate from tertiary institutions are not equipped with the skills with which to exploit the natural resources that bound in Nigeria. Sustainable development has emerged as an influential, yet controversial concept for business and policy. There are observed awareness Nigeria-wide that a fundamental transformation in the way society consumes natural resources and produce energy may be required if we are to make progress in pressing environmental issues such as ecosystem degradation and global climate change. With this in context, entrepreneurship is increasingly being dangled as the pertinent source and solution to facilitate sustainable products and processes. Despite the promises entrepreneurship holds in engendering sustainable development, there are some observed uncertainty as regards the nature of entrepreneurship roles in the area of sustainability and how it may manifest. The whole idea of entrepreneurship is about self employment which will generate employment opportunities to others that must work with him as he cannot work alone. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that entrepreneurship education concerns entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial /enterprising process and as an outcome, the enterprise of whatever context or conceptual content it relates to as well as the dynamics between them. Consequently, revising the terminology of entrepreneurship education from the perspective of education, it is possible to focus the debate on its core element and identify its key dimension as Scott et al. (1998) recommends. Taking the entrepreneurship as a point of departure, key dimensions concern the interplay between the actor, the process and the outcome. This paper reviews the factors and challenges inherent in the teaching of entrepreneurship education in Higher

Education Institutions. It further elucidates the strategies to employ in addressing the challenges and enhancing the teaching of entrepreneurship education within the entire academic precinct of the Higher Education Institutions in Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework

Within the first decade of Nigeria's independence (1960 – 1970) the country was mainly agrarian; it thus depended on agriculture both for local sustenance and foreign exchange generation. The education system was directed at production of graduates for government employment. It thus continued graduating students without taking cognizance of the labour

market. The matter of unemployment and poverty were not issues of national concern. The economy though monolithic was flourishing. The public service at that time was capable of absorbing up to 70% of the labour force. The economy progressed and was further reinforced by the oil boom of the 1970's. However, the trend changed by 1980's when following political instability and inconsistencies in the socio-economic policies of governments the economy began to crumble. There was unmanageable escalation in the rate of unemployment and poverty. As a result the country experienced collapse of several business enterprises, high rate of retrenchment and retirement of workers. The menacing problem of unemployment and poverty spurred the Nigerian government into developing a policy framework for youth entrepreneurship education. This saw the birth of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in 1986, and the Work For Yourself Programme (WFYP) in 1987. Both programmes were joint programmes of training and financial support to entrepreneurs. The NDE was however more extensive and included three core programmes namely the Youth Employment and Vocational Skills Development Programme; the Agricultural Programmes, and the Small Scale Industries and Graduate Employment Scheme. It was charged with a number of responsibilities including the following:

- a) to create employment opportunities and thereby reduce unemployment among youths and university graduates in the country
- b) to provide an enabling atmosphere for self reliance
- c) to foster entrepreneurship

Both the NDE and WFYP made impacts on the economy as they were able to empower young graduates in the task of job and wealth creation through entrepreneurial thinking. However, the youths were also confronted with the problem of non-possession of sound knowledge of entrepreneurship. In an effort to fill this gap the NDE introduced the Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) which has as its principal function the offering of functional education for the youth to enable them to be self employed and self reliant. This marked the beginning of policy statements encouraging the teaching of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. These efforts notwithstanding the problem of graduate unemployment continued to soar high and constituted a major problem of the Nigerian nation. It could therefore be logical to say that tertiary education in Nigeria failed to meet the employment requirements of its teeming graduates. In order to further address this issue, the Federal Government of Nigeria launched the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) with the vision of equipping youths with various skills to make them self reliant and consequently make poverty a thing of the past in the country. In order to realize this vision, NEEDS focused on four key strategies: namely; reorienting values, reducing poverty, creating wealth and

generating employment. (National Planning Commission, (NPC) 2005). To ensure co-ordination, it was matched with endorsement by states as well as a commitment to the development of their own State Economic Empowerment Strategy (SEEDS) (NPC 2005). Consequently, the National Universities Commission recently introduced Entrepreneurship as a course into the curriculum of Universities in Nigeria. The aim was to challenge and equip its graduates with entrepreneurial skills. While the progress is impressive it is still quite limited.

A vast majority of Nigerians especially young graduates still cannot easily access entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship resources. Identifying the elements of entrepreneurship education starts by looking at the terms used for it. A study conducted in 1989 by Durham University Business schools identified different between terms in the USA, Canada ,UK and other USA and CANADA whereas the terms ‘enterprises education’ was used in the UK and Finland, revealed difference in terms (Erkkila 2000). In order to avoid conceptual confusion Erkkila suggest that we should use a single concept of entrepreneurial education’. Allan Gibb posits that there is a substantial synonymity between entrepreneur and enterprising behaviours. The only major distinction that can be made is that an entrepreneur actor is traditional associated with business activity (Gibb, 1993). In his later writing Gibb (2001) has started to use these terms synonymously. The concept of entrepreneurship is associated with a number of activities including the following:

- a) the ability to create and build something from nothing
- b) the ability of having a vision matched with focus and determination of building an enterprise.
- c) the skill for seeing an opportunity where others fail to do so.
- d) the ability to build a working team to complement your own talents and efforts
- e) the ability to aggregate, marshal and control resources judiciously
- f) the willingness and ability of innovativeness and creativity
- g) the willingness to undertake personal and financial risks
- h) the ability to engage in activities despite all odds and in fact surmounting these odds and possibly turn them into your own favours.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Education is the acquisition of knowledge, the aggregate of all processes through which a person develops ability, attitudes and other forms of behavior with positive values in the Society in which he lives. Fafumva (1991) describes education as all efforts, conscious and direct, incidental and indirect, made by a given society to accomplish certain objectives that are considered desirable in terms of the individual's own needs as the needs of the society where that education is based. But Erder (1966) regards it as a manpower industry producing the knowledge and skills necessary for development. Education is derived from the needs and

demands of the society thus it is seen as a microscopic reflection of the total society needed for both stability and continuity. *Entrepreneurship is the ability to create and build something from practically nothing. It is initiating, doing, achieving and building an enterprise or organization, rather than just watching, analyzing, or describing one. It is the knack for sensing an opportunity where others see chaos, contradiction and confusion. It is the ability to build a "founding team" to complement your own skills and talents. It is the know-how to find, marshal and control resources (often owned by others) and to make sure you don't run out of money when you need it most. Finally, it is the willingness to take calculated risks, both personal and financial, and then do everything possible to get the odds in your favour.*

Entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It covers creativity, innovation and risk taking, and the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports everyone in day-to-day life at home and in society, makes employees more aware of the context of their work and better able to seize opportunities, and provides a foundation for entrepreneurs setting up social or commercial activities.

From the foregoing, this book seeks to contribute the under-listed acronym to the term entrepreneurship:

- E**:xamine needs, wants, and problems.
- N**:ote and narrow down the possible opportunities to one specific "best" opportunity.
- T**:otal commitment with high work ethics
- R**:eliable and passionate
- E**:nterprising personality and behaviour
- P**:roactive and pragmatic
- R**:elationship Management expert
- E**:nergetic and competitive by nature
- N**:ever allow reactivity or limiting belief
- E**:mphasise on key performance indicators and critical success factors of the business.
- U**:nderstanding of the need for commitment and high work ethics.
- R**:ealistic and positive accomplishment and creative destruction
- S**:eized by passion to make things happen positively for the business.
- H**:ighly focused and motivated
- I**:nnovator with inner drive for success.
- P**:ossibility mentality

Source: Oluwasanya A.T (2012)

Entrepreneurship education is a relatively new academic discipline. It is multidisciplinary in nature, having strong emphasis in economics, covering business disciplines like management, marketing, and finance; and closely linking with other disciplines like psychology, sociology, anthropology, teacher and business education. It goes beyond textbooks teachings and involves a wide spectrum of life ideas drawing practically from life experiences. Although its

development is quite recent, the phenomenon has been recognized as a key factor in economic growth of any nation. Entrepreneurship Education is therefore that education which assists students to develop positive attitudes, innovation and skills for self reliance, rather than depending on the government for employment, this will in-turn produce graduates with self confidence and capacities for independent thought to discover new information leading to economic development (Emeraton, 2008). Entrepreneurship education is the type of education designed to change the orientation and attitude of the recipients and the process will equip them with die skills and knowledge to enable them start and manage a business (Agu, 2006). Agreeing with Emeraton (2008), he opined that entrepreneurship education aims at developing the requisite entrepreneurial skills, attitudes, competencies, and disposition that will predispose individual to be a driving force in managing a business. - Akpomi (201)9) also holds the view that entrepreneurship education focuses on developing understanding and capacity for pursuit of entrepreneurial behaviours, skills and attitudes in widely different contexts. He continued that this type of education is open to all and not exclusively domain of the some self acclaimed business gurus. He concluded that these behaviours can be practiced, developed and learned therefore it is important to expose all students to entrepreneurship education. Osuala (2010) defined entrepreneurship education as a programme or part of a programme that prepares individuals to undertake the formation and or operation of small business enterprises which also includes franchise operations for the purpose of performing all business functions relating to a product or service with emphasis on social responsibilities, legal requirement and risks for the sake of profit involved in the conduct of private business enterprises. From the above definition, it is evident that entrepreneurship education could turn around the economic fortune of Nigeria by providing jobs and reduce the unemployment rate in Nigeria hence reducing the poverty level of Nigerians. It could also help an individual to identify investment opportunities and help them to harness untapped natural resources in Nigeria in order to produce the goods and services needed in the country. These will no doubt reduce or eliminate poverty and help to increase per capital income in the country which is one of the cardinal points of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Despite controversies surrounding it, sustainable development has emerged as an increasingly influential concept in managerial and academic settings. Sustainability has become a mainstay of corporate strategy, with nearly every major firm having a vice-president level executive with "sustainability" in his or her title. Most large firms now have explicit public sustainability policy statements and claim to apply a "triple bottom line" that considers a firm's financial, environmental, and social performance (Elkington, 1998). All manner of waste reduction and resource reduction and resource substitution are rewarded as symbols of good corporate citizenship (Clelland et al. 2000). In many circles, the term "corporate sustainability" has become a synonym for "corporate social responsibility".The term "sustainable development" was first muted at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 and later gained prominence by way of a report to the United Nations by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED.1Q87). The definition emerging from the report, "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their unmet needs"

At its core is the notion that all natural systems have limits, and that human well-being requires living within those limits. Sustainable development implies that renewable resources should be applied whenever possible and societies could somehow have their cake and eat it too and that the opportunities to develop in ways consistent with all three objectives (social, environment and economic) are bountiful - the assumption being that firms and nations could utilize resources in such a way as to promote abundance for current generations without sacrificing

opportunities for the future ones. This assumption grew out of a desire to promote equitable distribution of the benefits of economic growth, This desire emerged from the realization that resources were growingly insufficient to allow the so-called developing world to develop along the same lines as the first world.

Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education according to Oluwasanya (2013) is structured to achieve the following objectives.

1. To offer functional education for the youth that will enable them to be self-employed, self-reliance and subsequently encourage them to drive profit and be self-independent.
2. Offer tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management, creativity, innovativeness in identifying new business opportunities and support necessary to help them establish a career in small and medium size business
3. To inculcate the spirit of perseverance and possibility mentality in the youths and adults which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on.
4. To serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development.
5. To stimulate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed area.
6. To reduce high rate of poverty.
7. Stimulates job creation.
8. Employment generation.
9. Reduction in rural-urban migration.
10. Create smooth transition from traditional to a modern industrial economy.

Not everyone needs to become an entrepreneur to benefit from entrepreneurship education, but all members of society need to be more entrepreneurial. The public sector, private sector, academia and non-profit sectors all have roles to play in facilitating the development of effective ecosystems that encourage and support the creation of innovative new ventures.

Challenges of Entrepreneurship Education

There are several factors that challenge the teaching of entrepreneurship education in higher education institutions notably;

- a) Nigeria's macro-economic environment is unhealthy and unstable for a virile entrepreneurship development
- b) The fear of failure by the people to take risk on entrepreneurial activities, bile an unstable and conducive political environment drives away investor that are planning to embark on entrepreneurial activities.
- c) In addition, government programmes are not designed to promote entrepreneurship and enterprising behaviour,
- d) The level of infrastructural development provided by the government is still very low and this has been affecting to a very high extent the level of entrepreneurial activities in the country.

- e) The high rate of many business enterprises as winding up prematurely consequent upon the employable and unemployable youths and adults idle away. It is against this backdrop that this paper set to look into entrepreneurship education as imperative for sustainable development in Nigeria.
- f) There should be some form of genuine school work based learning incorporated in some studies as part of the national economic development strategies. The development of apprenticeship scheme would give new graduates some work skills and experience.
- g) Poor local public and private funds to create a small venture capital fund.
- h) Absence of school-based enterprises where students identify potential business, plan, create and operate small business using the school as mini-incubators.
- i) Absence of venture-some or enterprising behaviour: The polytechnic, students and educators must develop an enterprising or venture-some behaviour such as opportunity orientation, commitment to opportunity orientation, commitment of resources etc
- j) *Competency of Educators*: Weidman (1977) defined competency as an attitude, behaviour, skill or understanding demonstrated by a learner at a specified level of performance. The current situation is that most lecturers have not been trained in entrepreneurship. Consequently, they may be unaware of the right approach to entrepreneurship teaching. Teachers should have a better understanding of entrepreneurship education and the range of aims, methods and contents of it. There is need to train the trainers through local and international seminars and workshops and to disseminate understanding of different ways and methods to support the entrepreneurial mindset.
- k) There seems to be in general a gap between the teaching methods considered to be most effective for fostering entrepreneurship education and those that are currently used. In many cases, on the job training on entrepreneurship is provided by external organizations delivering programmes to Higher Education Institutions. Higher Education Institution's educators who are not competent in entrepreneurship education may not be able to teach it. Entrepreneurship Education is new in Higher Education Institution's curriculum and it is obvious that most of the lecturers may not be competent to teach it.
- l) Lack of an interdisciplinary way of working on concrete projects. Opportunities are missed when teachers prefer to focus on their own courses rather than to consult with other teachers and propose a wider integration of different learning subjects.
- m) *Absence of relevant textbooks*: Since entrepreneurship education is a new inclusion into Higher Education Institution's curriculum, there is also the problem of lack of adequate textbooks on it. This has really challenged the teaching of the course in polytechnics and other higher education institution.
- n) *Inadequate Enablers*: It is quite glaring that most polytechnics and other higher education institutions have not been able to provide adequate facilities and equipment to cope with the increasing enrolment of students.
- o) *Inadequate Funding* : Inadequate funding of Higher Education Institutions has often affected the teaching and learning of Entrepreneurship. It is the major reason for inadequate facilities and equipment in the institution.

- p) *Poor enterprise culture*: Due to lack of adequate training centres and enterprises, students are faced with the problems of getting appropriate establishment to gain experience. They end up attaching themselves to roadside vendors and entrepreneurial ventures where they often acquire wrong enterprising culture and skills. This is contrary to the goals of students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) which is expected to provide students with opportunities of exposure to practical experiences and relating the knowledge and skills learnt in the classroom to the business parlance.

The list is endless but it sums up the in-explainable realities of our prevailing predicaments.

Educational for Sustainable Development

Education for Sustainable Development is the focus or projection of education that seeks to equip people towards creating a sustainable future. Stakeholders such as government, businesses, educational institutions, media, and organizations play pertinent roles in achieving sustainable development. Each of these sectors has a different vision of sustainable development. Some are interested in environmental preservation and protection; some have economic development interests while other may be more interested in social development. According to UNESCO (2000) the way each nation, cultural group and individual views sustainable development will depend on its own values. In many European nations, Universities and technical colleges trained students of science, economics and business management in skills that helps to build more sustainable societies. Programmes such as Peace Education, Human Right Education, Environmental Education and "Youth Entrepreneur" schemes are carried out in many schools. Hence, such initiatives help students and teachers to gain an understanding of the inter-linkages needed for sustainable development. The emphasis has been on education that will provide life and occupational skills that will enhance the venturesome and enterprising potentials of individual, reinforcing self-sufficiency and improving quality of life.

Entrepreneurship Education and Sustainable Development in Nigeria.

The Nigerian government realised the need to break away from the vicious cycle of poverty, infrastructural inadequacies, corruption and other notable gamut of social problems. It must be noted that after 45 years of achieving colonial independence, it cannot be justified that Nigeria has attained her optimum level of development. According to Kolawole and Omolayo (2006), many individuals have difficulties in translating their business ideas to realities and creating new business ventures because of lack of necessary information and skills needed to achieve their targets. To him, the university curriculum was in the past oriented towards making graduates suitable only for white-collar jobs. This underscores why millions of our youths and a lot of university graduates roam about the streets of the major cities and towns in search of white-collar jobs. It is therefore necessary and expedient to position Nigerian universities to stimulate economic growth through a deliberate agenda of production of entrepreneurial graduates. In many countries, including US, Higher Education Institution's offer entrepreneurship education for life-long trade and many of them offer courses that enable students to meet their general academic requirement while learning a trade. However, because of the recent challenges in world economy Higher Education Institution's have shifted emphasis to entrepreneurship education, information technology and related fields. Higher Education Institutions work closely with willing industries to establish curriculum and programmes to meet their needs. The apathy towards entrepreneurship education is vitiating

the contribution which the nation's graduate would have made to the economy. In Nigeria, graduates of Higher Education Institutions become highly skilled entrepreneurs.

CONCLUSIVE REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Entrepreneurship education is a carefully planned process that leads to the acquisition of entrepreneurial capacities and competencies. It seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in notable gamut of ventures. Higher Education Institution's graduates are expected to be prepared for teaching and self - employment. Thus entrepreneurship education needs to be promoted within the Higher Education Institution 's programme. Considering the imperatives and expediency of entrepreneurship education, the following recommendations are made:

- More Higher Education Institutions should be made to run entrepreneurship education as a discipline like Accountancy, sociology, psychology etc. This will solve the problem of inadequate qualified staff to teaching the course in our institutions of higher teaming in Nigeria.
- There should be synergy and cooperation between Higher Education Institutions and enterprises although good results very often depend on the individual initiative of authorities and facilitators.
- One of the main difficulties is involving small and micro-enterprises in higher education institution's activities. Small companies do not have sufficient time to dedicate to work placements of students in the company or do not see any benefit in cooperating with schools.
- There is need to provide opportunities for youths to raise funds to enable them start up and expand their business enterprise in a manner that will be significant to them. This may be achieved through bursary awards and other such in school assistance to enable youths acquire savings before they are out of school or through grants to them on graduation.
- The government should mandate financial institutions like commercial banks to produce and issue more age-friendly loans. Such loans would have low interest rates and long duration for repayments.
- Youths should be exposed to training in technology (especially new discoveries) from time to time. This keeps them in tune with trends of the technological world and thus avoids drudgery in their business.
- There should be efforts to reinforce in youths the concept of risk taking and patience in wealth creation. This instills positive change of entrepreneurial attitude. They would thus develop habit of success out of failure which is the only way to making money in the long run.
- Government and Non governmental agencies should provide enabling environment and such environment be sustained for assurance. Such 'as infrastructural facilities, water supply, modern information technology (ICT) among others.
- The fight against corruption and indiscipline should be continued with vigor at all levels and sectors.

- Effective supervision and evaluation of programme implementation and funding must be ensured on a continuous basis.
- Students Industrial work experience scheme (SIWES) should be enhanced and made more effective.

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