

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR SELF RELIANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *The Nigeria government introduced entrepreneurship education as a pathway to stimulate self- sufficiency, self-sustainability and self-support culture in students. The aim is to ensure graduates take advantages of personal resourcefulness to be self-employed. This is because entrepreneurship concerns the persistent pursuit of opportunities to create wealth through innovative creation of a product or service that meets customer's needs using scarce resources in a way that results in a growth enterprise which satisfies the expectation of stakeholders whose roles sustain the business. Against this backdrop, therefore, the paper examines the concepts of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education and self-reliance. The paper equally examines the role of entrepreneurship education in self-reliance and economic development and highlighted the challenges for entrepreneurship education in Nigeria such as inadequate funding, lack of materials, entrepreneurship teachers among others. Finally, it recommends that the government should strive to release up to 26% of their annual budget for education as suggested by UNESCO.*

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education, self-Reliance and Economic Development

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria experienced a robust economy during the era of “oil-boom” in the 1970s. Then those who graduated from school were easily absorbed into the available job vacancies in the country. But all these changed in the mid-1980s, with worldwide depression and significant depression in the Nigeria's economy. This resulted in unemployment around the world, most especially developing countries such as Nigeria. The outcome of the high rate of unemployment was social vices like armed robbery and kidnapping for ransom. More recent is the global economic meltdown that led to youth and graduate unemployment to hit the roof. In this regards, various governmental and non-governmental organizations have initiated policies through support agencies such as National Directorate for Employment (NDE), the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Small Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN), National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion (NOTAP), Raw Materials and Development Council (RMRDC) among others to address the problems of unemployment among Nigerian citizens (Olayinka 2010, Emmanuel 2012, Akluemonkhan, Raimi and Sofoluwe 2013). The aim of these programmes, agencies and councils was with the belief that the development of self-employment and small enterprise initiatives would unlock the economic potentials of the people increase the capacity to empower and equip individuals in society to participate and benefit from their national economy as well as facilitates economic development which forms the bases for transformation (Ekpo and Edet 2011 in Babatunde and Babatunde 2014). Admittedly, in line with the National Productively Day of 21st February, 1991 theme of “Productivity for Self-Reliance and Excellence”, the Nigeria government

introduced entrepreneurship education in schools as a pathway to stimulate self-sufficiency, self-sustainability and self-support culture in students. The aim is to ensure graduates take advantage of personal resourcefulness to be self-employed. This is because entrepreneurship concerns the persistent pursuit of opportunities to create wealth through innovative creation of a product or service that meets customers' needs, using scarce resources in a way that results in a growth enterprise which satisfies the expectation of stakeholders whose roles sustain the business. Entrepreneurship education provides knowledge, skills attitude and motivation to students for entrepreneurial success in any setting. It equips people with the ability to seek investment opportunities (Azonuche and Umeri, 2012).

Concepts Clarification

Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurship is the ability to perceive and undertake business opportunities, taking advantage of scarce resources utilization. Entrepreneurship is the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort assuming the accompanying financial, psychic and social risk and reserving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence (Hisrich and Peters, 2002).

Entrepreneurship Education: Entrepreneurship education is a form of education that seeks to provide knowledge, skills, attitude and motivation to students for entrepreneurial success in any setting. It equips people with the ability to seek investment opportunities (Azonuche and Umeri, 2012). Entrepreneurship education according to Paul (2005) is structured to achieve the following objectives:

- To offer functional education for the youth that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant.
- Provide the youth graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities.
- To serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development
- Offer tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management, to make certain bearing feasible.
- To reduce high rate of poverty
- Create employment generation
- Reduction in rural-urban migration
- Provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and medium sized business.
- To inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adults which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on.
- Create smooth transition from traditional to a modern industrial economy.

Self-Reliance: Self-reliance is synonymous with self-sufficiency. It means doing things for ourselves rather than having things done for us. Self-reliance is the personal initiative in the ability and effort to identify, harness and manage effectively and efficiently the personal and collective resources, human or natural in the immediate surroundings in order to uplift one's or a people's life quality, standard and condition of existence (Olayiwola, 2012). He noted that self-reliance cautions against dependency-syndrome on the government as the monopoly of development. Self-reliance and its kin-terms accentuates people's primary role as principal agents of development and self-determination both on the individual and collective levels.

Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria

The history of Nigeria educational system could be traced back to the colonial period. The educational system was tailored towards serving the interest of the colonial masters in terms of supplying manpower for their effective administration of Nigeria as a colony and protectorates (Alade-Komo, 2004). The policy was aimed at producing Nigerian graduate who could read and write to hold certain positions such as clerks interpreters, inspectors and so on. Without any entrepreneurial skills or professional skills to stand on their own or establish and manage their own ventures. The Nigerian industrial policy that came immediately after independence placed emphasis on the establishment of big companies while completely neglecting the development and growth of small scale sectors (Alade-komo, 2004). This together with the poor educational policy of initial stage no doubt led to the neglect of a foundation for entrepreneurship. This neglect invariably meant destroying entrepreneurship at the micro level in Nigeria at the very beginning, which is considered to be very essential for economic growth and development. The ever pressing demand for white collar jobs for majority of graduates is certainly an upshot of colonial educational policies.

In the mid-1970s, however, the federal government because of perceived importance of small scale industries to the economy, shifted focus and attention to the development of small scale sectors. Some industrial centers and some institutions were established to support the activities of entrepreneurs in the country. Some of the institutions set up during this period include the Nigerian Industrial Bank (NIB), Nigerian Bank for Commerce and Industrial (NBCI), Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperatives Bank (NACB). The 1984 National Policy of education attempted to link the policy with the issue of self-employment and the industrial policy. The emphasis-on primary and secondary education. The higher education policy as stipulated was expected to produce graduates to cater for the introduction of scientists and technologists and absolutely not directed at self-employment, but for the few vacant positions in private (Multi-National cooperation's and government or public offices (Iniobong, 2013).

In order to overcome these short comings and in response to the current socio-economic problems of the country, particularly the problem of youth unemployment, questions were raised by various stakeholders as to what kind of education may be suitable in propelling development in the country- Many suggestions were made in favour of refocusing the current Nigerian educational system to reflect present realities. As a result technical and vocational education received a lot of attention at both the state and federal levels. To this ends different institutions were established to offer technical education. They included technical colleges, polytechnics, Colleges of Education, Vocational Schools and Centers in different parts of the country. In recent times, the most visible educational reform in the country is on higher education. Under this reform, Vocational Enterprise Institutions (VEI) and Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEI) was introduced by the government to provide another dimension for Higher Education in Nigeria. The VEI's and IEI's are principally private institutions that offer vocational, technical, technology professional education and skill-based training at post basic (VEI) and post-secondary (IEI) levels to equip youths and working adults with employment skills knowledge to meet the increasing demand for technical manpower by various sectors of the nation's economy (Iniobong, 2013). This notwithstanding, many graduates still come out of Universities and other higher institutions of learning with the expectation to work for others and not for themselves. This perhaps may be traceable to lack of or inadequate finance and the will to take off on their own. The unprecedented increasing number of graduates without corresponding and unemployment generally has become a taking

shop in the country. Thus, refocusing on entrepreneurial education has become necessary to make this increasing number of graduates self-reliant

Entrepreneurship Education and Self-Reliance

Quality entrepreneurship education will enhance job creation which will subsequently reduce unemployment, poverty and social vices in Nigeria. This will also help to improve the standard of living; hence promote social economic and political development in Nigeria which is the cardinal objective of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Maina, 2014). According to him, for recipient of entrepreneurship education to be a job creator rather than job-seeker, he might acquire essential basic skills and attitudes which will be enable him to function as an entrepreneur. Thus, entrepreneurship education would lead to self-reliance improves the quality of life and the general standard of living of the masses. It reflects in the following economic indicators such as Higher Profit Employers, more employment, Higher Productivity, Promotion of Innovative Technologies, products and services and increase in local sourcing of raw materials (Okoba, 2000). Therefore, for a country striving to attain self-reliance economy, its educational system should be designed to involve robust entrepreneurial curriculum. In order to achieve viable entrepreneurship education that will enhance self-reliance, education planning effort must therefore:

- Recognize the technological imperatives in modem industrialization and provide suitable arrangements for orientation of the labour force towards technology adoption;
- Ensure that the educational system is geared not only for quality, because high quality academic preparation is a prerequisite for the type of industrialization that will transform the nation;
- Eradicate imbalance in skill formation through meaningful attention to the enhancement of intermediate technical skills and artisanal training.

Entrepreneurship Education and Economic Development

Skills and knowledge are the driving forces of economic growth and development for any country. Countries with higher and better levels of skills adjust more effectively to the challenges and opportunities of world of work (National Skill Development Policy, 2009). Entrepreneurship education helps in developing skills that generate an entrepreneurial mindset and preparing future leaders for solving more complex, interlinked, test-changing problems, develop the human capital required for building the generations societies of the future. It serves as engine fueling innovation, employment generations, economic growth and social welfare (Schward, 2009). This is because entrepreneurship education tends to make the curriculum more functional. Functional curriculum, according to Esu (2010) is designed to teach students skills that will equip them to function as competent and accepted adults in the society. In this way, entrepreneurship education equips youths with passion and multiple skills to operate a successful business on their own (Izedonmi and Okafor, 2010).

Recommendations

1. The government should strive to release up to 26% of their annual budget for education as suggested by UNESCO. This enhances the provision of necessary materials, equipment and personnel needed for full implementation of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.

2. A new and workable education policy should be provided that favour the smooth implementation of entrepreneurship education at all levels of education.
3. Government should ensure that there are adequate provision of materials, equipment and facilities for proper teaching of entrepreneurship skills in schools.
4. There should be adequate and robust entrepreneurship education curriculum/contents in teacher's education in Nigeria.
5. There should be properly re-training. Programmes for teachers on entrepreneurship education since they are the personnel that will implement the entrepreneurship curriculum.

CONCLUSION

An attempt has been made in this paper to highlight the insights of entrepreneurship education for self-reliance and economic development in Nigeria. The paper equally examined the concepts of Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship education, self-reliance and development. The lessons from entrepreneurship education in form of creating job for one's self, crime reduction, poverty reduction, and provision of the necessary means of economic growth and development were highlighted.

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