

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: A TOOL FOR JOB CREATION AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper has made an exposition of the significance of entrepreneurship education as a potent tool for equipping beneficiaries to emerge as job creators and economic developers in the midst of escalating rate of unemployment. The focus of this paper is to highlight the importance of entrepreneurship education as a tool for job creation and sustainable economic development in Nigeria. The paper x-rayed the major concept of entrepreneurship education and its role in national development. It also discussed how entrepreneurship education acts as a catalyst for job creation and economic development. Challenges such as inadequate funding, lack of mentorship and unfocused curriculum were also highlighted as constraints to entrepreneurship education. However, useful recommendations such as provision of mentorship and internship programmes, specialized or focused entrepreneurship curriculum and availability of cheap loanable funds to young, graduates with entrepreneurial skills and knowledge were put forward.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, mentorship education, job creation, sustainable economic development

Introduction

The absence of job as well as the inability of the three tiers of government to create jobs to sustain the ever growing population is a serious concern to every one today. All the political parties in Nigeria have promised without reservation to create enough jobs before the end of their tenure; yet things have remained worse-off. Our educational system is too formal to provide modern day graduates with the required skills to cope in the private sector. This collaborates with Towobola and Raimi (2011) and Simkovic

(2012) assertion when they posited that the age-long formal education inherited from the imperialist turned out graduates with job-seeking mind-sets as opposed to job-creation. They thus, lack entrepreneurial traits like self-motivation, drive and innovation needed by the world of work and employers of labour. Similarly, Aladekomo (2004) also stated that the colonial educational policy centred on the production of literate nationals who were required to man positions, which would strengthen the colonial administration. Thus, our educational institutions, few as they were

remained factories for producing clerks, interpreters, forest guards and sanitary inspectors as no special professional nor entrepreneurial skill was envisaged in the educational system. The society sees young men and women who venture into small scale businesses as academic failures or drop-out.

Another key area of concern in Nigeria is the geometric/astronomic rise in population that are not catered for by the scanty job opportunities available. Bulk of the population consists of able-bodied youths that are jobless. Most of them roam the streets and towns thereby indulging in prostitution, drug pushing, armed robbery, oil banking, kidnapping and other fraudulent activities. The National population commission NPC (2001) as cited in Oviawe (2010) revealed that more than half of the population of Nigeria are under the age of 30 years. This implies that we have a nation with unproductive youths plagued by unemployment, poverty, unentrepreneurial skills to sustain and move the country to the next level of economic and social development.

Zimmerer and Scarborough (2005) as cited in Ofishe, (2011) stated that individuals with entrepreneurial spirit or drive are those who create new jobs or businesses for the purpose of achieving profit and growth for the society. But government and its financial regulatory agencies are not doing enough to encourage the few persons who have this entrepreneurial drive and spirit to open up small scale businesses that will help in sustaining the economy. Interest rates from financial institutions are at cut-throat. Consequently, the few equipped with entrepreneurial education look for safe havens in paid employment rather than

actualizing their dreams and talents in job creation.

Concept of Entrepreneurship

The term “entrepreneurship” originated from the French word “entreprede” which means to undertake “Venture and encroach” (Okoro and Ofishe, 2011). It was first used by Richard Cartillion in the 17th century to describe ownership of business ventures. Warriwei and Ndiomu (2014) sees an entrepreneur as a person who conceives an idea, utilizes identified opportunities by employing the factors of production: land, labour, capital and time towards productive ends by way of bringing about appropriate innovation either in the production process by revitalizing an existing business or begin an entirely new one. This definition provides the fundamental economic basis for harmonizing all the factors of production towards creating jobs and developing a nation. Burdus (2010) on his part defined an entrepreneur as a person who creates new business taking risks in achieving the objectives with the aim of making profits and growth by identifying some important opportunities.

According to Nwangwu (2006) entrepreneurship is the willingness and the ability of an individual or a firm or an organization to identify an environmental change and exploit such an opportunity to produce goods and services for public consumption. Similarly, Suleiman (2006) and Arogundade (2011) also stated that the concept of entrepreneurship concerns the willingness and ability of an individual to seek for investment opportunities, to establish and to run an enterprise successfully. In a nutshell, entrepreneurship is the personal quality that enables people to start a new business or vigorously and innovatively

expand an existing one, thereby maintaining and revitalizing the growth of an economy.

Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria

Unlike entrepreneurship as a concept, entrepreneurship education deals with how individuals acquire entrepreneurial skills. It is a process of preparing the learner to undertake the operation of a business concern using the limited resources at his or her disposal. Osuala, (2004) defines entrepreneurship education as a programme that prepares individuals to undertake the formation and or operation of a small business enterprise. It is a programme of instruction that will enable the beneficiary be properly equipped to establish and operate a profit-oriented economic venture towards national development. Adding their voices Ndifon, Usoro and Edem (2014) posited that entrepreneurship education involves a specialized training given to students of any vocational discipline to enable them acquire the skills, ideas and managerial abilities and capabilities for self-employment other than being employed for pay. Conceptually, Akarue and Adogbeji (2014) sees entrepreneurship education as a specialized knowledge that inculcate in learners the traits of risk-taking, innovation, arbitrage and co-ordination of factors of production for the purpose of creating new products or services for new and existing users within human communities. Again, Ashmore (2007) noted that entrepreneurship education seeks to prepare people especially youths to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and who contribute to economic development and sustainable community. In other words it is obvious that

entrepreneurship education is one of the key elements that facilitate self fulfilment, job creation and sustainable development. Hence, Fayolle (2011) in Nwekeaku (2013) opined that entrepreneurship education or training is designed to teach you the skills and knowledge you need to know before embarking on a new business venture. Thus from the various assertions above, it is obvious that entrepreneurship education is a teachable and learnable concept.

Entrepreneurship and National Development in Nigeria

Following the increasing rate of unemployment and the dwindling economic and national development; the Nigerian government thought it wise to introduce entrepreneurship education as a means of arresting the hydra-headed problem. Thus entrepreneurship education was introduced into Nigeria tertiary institutions in 2006. This was done across all courses in order to accelerate economic growth and national development. In the views of Osiagwu (2002), entrepreneurship education should be perceived as a catalyst to increase the rate of economic growth, create job opportunities, reduce importation of manufactured goods and decreases trade deficits that result from importation. Matanmi and Awodun (2005) contributed that Nigeria must give adequate attention to the growth of entrepreneurship in order to move out of the disturbing high level of unemployment and ravaging level of poverty. In other words, for proper economic and national development to take place a country must develop its entrepreneurship drive through a vibrant and functional entrepreneurship education and policy. This is why Ariyo (2008) posited that a nation must recognize the importance of its indigenous entrepreneurs and their

contributions to its economy in order to attain its full potentials in economic and social development.

In recent times, several research efforts have been carried out by Fiet (2002), Olagunju (2004), Eno-obong (2006), Anyakoha (2006), Adegebite, Ilori, Iretin, Abereijo and Aderemi (2006), Raimi (2010), Oladele, Akeke and Oladunjoye (2011), Osemek (2012) and Maina (2013) have examined different issues and the contributions of entrepreneurship towards sustainable economic and national development, job creation, innovation and resources allocation in Nigeria. Hence as a matter of importance and urgency, Nigeria must therefore continue to promote and develop entrepreneurship education that will aid the dispersal and diversification of economic activities and induce even development. Previous attempt towards sustainable job creation, economic and national development by government over the years can be itemized as follow:

- a) The Indigenization Decree (1972/77)
- b) Nigeria Enterprises Promotion Decree (1972)
- c) Export Promotion Decree (1977)
- d) Structural Adjustment Programme (1986)
- e) Directorate for food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRI) 1986
- f) National Directorate of Employment, NDE (1986)
- g) Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN)
- h) Raw Material Research and Development Council (RMRDC) 1987
- i) The Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) 1987

- j) Export Promotion Council (1988)
- k) Privatization, Commercialization and Deregulation Policy (1988)
- l) National Industrial Policy 1988
- m) Nigeria Opportunities Industrialization Centre (NOIC)
- n) Federal Institute of Industrial Research (FIIR)
- o) Engineering and Material Development Institute (EMDI)
- p) The Nigeria Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) 2004
- q) National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)

The above list is inexhaustible. Some of the policies or decrees are mere duplication of previous ones with no substantial result. On the whole modern government policies on entrepreneurship development should be geared towards functional economic and national development of the country. Banabo and koroye (2011) concurred to the above assertion when they posited that human capacity development in the area of entrepreneurship must be encouraged and given greater vitality. This in itself will increase both the political and economic stability of the nation.

Entrepreneurship asa Catalyst for Job Creation and Economic Development in Nigeria

The Nigeria government seems to have woken up to the reality that the country needs to break away from the vicious circle of poverty, infrastructure neglect, corruption and other problems (Beetseh & Ahima, 2012). Consequently, as mentioned before the federal government deems it fit to introduce entrepreneurship education in 2006 across all tertiary institutions to facilitate the spirit of self employment and

general economic development. It is believed that several graduates from tertiary institutions and other individuals in the society lack the ability to translate their ideas into business realities and create new business ventures because of lack of necessary information and skills to achieve their target. To them the curricula of tertiary institutions in Nigeria were in the past oriented towards making graduates suitable only for white-collar jobs. But things have changed, we have more people seeking for jobs that are not available. Hence it is necessary for the government and educational institutions in Nigeria to stimulate job creation and economic development through qualitative and functional entrepreneurship education.

Entrepreneurs by their nature create jobs and facilitate social and economic development in every society. Thus, with good and functional entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurs can facilitate job creation and sustainable economic development through the following ways:

- i) Identification of viable opportunities: With sound entrepreneurship education and knowledge, an entrepreneur can quickly identify a business opportunity that can lead to the creation of jobs and economic development of the country.
- ii) Provision of financial assistance: Entrepreneurs with large business enterprises can provide financial assistance to small scale business ventures that supply them raw materials or auxiliary services. This could be achieved by paying them up front. Hence helping to create jobs and develop the economy.

iii) Creativity and innovation: For a continuous and sustainable job creation and economic development to be achieved, it is imperative for entrepreneurs to use their wealth of education to be creative and innovative. Through this means, jobs will be created continuously and the economy will also be developed substantially.

iv) Expansion: Entrepreneurs can also help in creating jobs and economic development if they expand their businesses into other territories. For example, Dangote has expanded his chain of businesses into other territories, state and countries, thereby creating more jobs for the citizens in those places.

v) Mentorship: Government should put in place entrepreneurship policies that will encourage mentorship of up-coming entrepreneurs by older and well experienced ones in order to stem business failure. This will help sustain existing enterprise as well as

the possibility of creating new and stronger ones. A provision such as tax relief or tax holiday should be added to such policy in order to encourage the older, bigger and experienced entrepreneurs to provide the mentorship services.

vi) Team Building: Functional entrepreneurs are able to build working teams that will compliment government efforts in job creation and nation building. They help to aggregate, marshal and control resources judiciously towards

sustaining the nation's economic development.

Challenges of Entrepreneurship Education and Job Creation in Nigeria

In spite of the developing role played by entrepreneurship education in job creation and nation building in Nigeria, several factors still act as constraints to its success. Some of the challenges faced by entrepreneurship education in the process of economic development includes:

- i) **Inadequate funding:** Our tertiary institutions that are supposed to be the main training ground for would-be entrepreneurs that will create jobs are grossly under funded. In some cases, funds made for such purpose are diverted into private pockets or other uses.
- ii) **Lack of mentorship and internship programmes:** Another challenging issue to entrepreneurship development in Nigeria is the lack of mentorship or internship training programmes for would-be entrepreneurs. The absence of this vocational training programme is not only affecting the creation of new businesses but also affecting the knowledge to sustain existing businesses.
- iii) **Students Attitudes:** The dream and attitude of most students is job seeking oriented and not entrepreneurship oriented. In other words, they want to graduate and work in other people's company but not to create their companies. This in effect slows down the creation of jobs in the society.

iv) **Lack of capital:** Lack of easy access to capital by young graduate who has acquired the entrepreneurial knowledge but don't have the means to start up their own small business. This in itself inhibits job creation and economic development in the country.

v) **Difficulties in obtaining licence:** Even young graduate who manage to gather start up capital have the problem of obtaining licence for their business to contend with. The corruption in the system is so endemic to the extent you must provide gratification for every legal services rendered at every table or office your document visits before they can be approved – this is discouraging and undermines national development.

vi) **Environmental Factors:** There are so many variables discouraging young graduates from setting up entrepreneurship businesses after acquiring entrepreneurial knowledge in school. Youth restiveness, multiple taxation, illegal levies by community youths are just few of the environmental factors militating against the setting up of businesses in volatile communities.

Conclusion

All over the world entrepreneurship still remains the bedrock for job creation and general economic development. It is obvious that since politicians and government can no longer handle the continuous rise in the level of unemployment; people should be trained and encouraged to go into self-employment and entrepreneurship businesses. Through this way they can facilitate several job

opportunities in the society and grow the economy to the next level. Thus, with a sound entrepreneurship education/mentorship to Nigerian students and young entrepreneur, series of jobs will be created and the state of the economy will be highly developed. A similar view was shared by Ofishe (2014) when he posited that the implementation of qualitative entrepreneurship education backed by government funding and facilities will go a long way to creating self – employment, self – reliance, self – confidence and functional economic development.

Recommendations

In order to achieve viable entrepreneurship education that will create substantial jobs for sustainable economic development in Nigeria, the following recommendations are made:

- a) Adequate funding: Government should provide adequate funds to all levels of tertiary institutions to provide functional entrepreneurship education that will lead to job creation and of economic development.
- b) Focused curriculum: Government and its education agencies such as NUC, NBTE, NCCCE and others should incorporate a well-tailored entrepreneurship curriculum that will train and expose students, potential and existing entrepreneurs on risk taking and handling, job creation and economic development.
- c) Mentorship/internship programme: The government and all tertiary institutions should design mentorship/internship programmes for students and young graduate entrepreneurs in order to create new businesses and sustain existing ones.

- d) Provision of loanable funds: Government should encourage the provision of loanable funds to young graduates through accredited financial institutions with soft conditions. This will assist young graduates with entrepreneurial skills and knowledge to create jobs easily.
- e) Security and infrastructures: Government should provide adequate security in the face of high insecurity. This is because many persons and investors with entrepreneurship knowledge are afraid to set up businesses that will create jobs for the teeming unemployed youths. The government should also provide adequate infrastructure such as road, light, water etc that will encourage entrepreneurs to set up businesses for economic development.
- f) Tailored courses: Entrepreneurship courses should be departmentalized and tailored on how each department can go into small scale business e.g. chemistry department should be taught how to open enterprises in soap making, insecticides and other chemical making businesses etc, (Ofishe, 2014).
- g) Availability of information: Students, young graduates and different entrepreneurs should be exposed to various sources of information and business opportunities both locally and overseas. This should be functional especially with the freedom of information bill that has been signed into law.

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