

ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS AS A TOOL FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN KWARA STATE

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is necessary because it is seen as a tool for developing an individual and the society at large. It also leads to self-employment, help in reducing unemployment and contribute towards development of the country. It is the desire of every community to achieve a sustainable level of economic development. This could be achieved through embarking on entrepreneurial activities by the citizens of such community. This is because the public sector cannot single-handedly provide the desired level of development. The success of a community in entrepreneurship depends on skills acquired by the people (entrepreneurs). This owes to the fact that education leads to creativity. Education also equips a person with relevant skills which would lead him/her to better performance in his/her chosen career. This paper addresses entrepreneurship skill that can be used to improve the development of communities in Kwara State. The paper finally made conclusion and recommended this among others that the federal, state and local government should frequently embark on entrepreneurship programmes so as to develop ideas and innovations in the society.

Key words: Entrepreneurship, Skills, Development, Community, Factors and Prospects.

Entrepreneurship was introduced to Nigeria like other countries of the world, because it has been accepted as an instrument for development of both people and the community. Entrepreneurship is the activity of venturing into new enterprises. As distinct from management, entrepreneurship is the creation of new

enterprises to meet new challenges and opportunities presented by a given situation. It is a process of bearing a non-insurable risk in order to achieve business objectives (Awe, 2006). Thus, entrepreneur perceives the commercial potency of an idea mobilizes the needed resources and provides the force to detonate the commercial exploitation of the business idea, the business idea then turns into a commercial venture; which adds economic value and has profit as its main objective.

Entrepreneurial activities have been found all over the world to be capable of making positive impacts on the economy of a nation and the quality of life of the people (ACs and Storey, 2004). They further noted that, studies have established its positive relationship with stimulation of economic growth; and empowerment of the disadvantaged segment of the population, which include women and the poor, and also examines the major problems of entrepreneurship and thus proposing some plausible changes. Entrepreneurship is now seen as an instrument of change to improve the standard of living and the development of the community.

Conceptual Framework Enterprise, Entrepreneur and Entrepreneurship

'**Entrepreneur**' is nothing else than the person who start an enterprise. The process of creation, including originality, innovating, capabilities, skills and difficulties is called '**entrepreneurship**'. The entrepreneur is the actor and entrepreneurship is the act, and the

place of exercise is the enterprise. Entrepreneurship is the most effective method for creating new enterprises, and bringing new products and services to the market. An 'enterprise' is a business organization that is formed and which provide goods and services, create jobs, contributes to national income, import, exports and above all sustainable economic development. To be more concise, an enterprise is a business venture. These entrepreneurial activities significantly affect the economy of a society by building the economic base and providing job opportunities. To be enterprising is to keep your eyes open and your mind active. You need to be skilled enough, confident enough, creative enough, and disciplined enough to seize opportunities that present themselves regardless of the environmental influence (Nwafor, 2007). According to Duru (2011), some basic characteristics of entrepreneurs include: Ambition; Optimism; Achievement orientation; Independent mindedness; Goal orientation; Individualism; Self-confidence; Open-mindedness and Tolerance for ambiguity.

Entrepreneurship Skills

Our review confirms that it is possible to identify a set of skills that can be characterized as 'entrepreneurship skills' which are distinct from, although closely related to accepted definitions of management and leadership skills.

Skill is thought of as a quality of performance which does not depend solely upon a person's fundamental, innate capacities but must be developed through training, practice and experience. Although skill depends essentially on learning, it also includes the concepts of efficiency and economy in performance. Modern concepts of skill stress the flexibility with which a skilled operator reaches a given end on different occasions according to precise circumstances. However, it must be reiterated that even though basic human capacities are not sufficient to

produce skills, they form the necessary basis of their development; skills represent particular ways of using capacities in relation to environmental demands, with human being and external situation together forming a functional system. There are many fields on what make someone an entrepreneur and what an entrepreneurial skill is. **Entrepreneurial skill** is the ability of an individual to exploit an idea and create an enterprise (Small or Big) not only for personal gain but also for social and developmental gain (Olagunju, 2004). **Entrepreneurial skill** can be defined as the ability to create something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic and social risks, and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence (Hisrich & Peters, 2002).

Entrepreneurship skills are associated with competence in the process of opportunity identification (and/or creation), the ability to capitalize on identified opportunities and a range of skills associated with developing and implementing business plans to enable such opportunities to be realised. There is evidence to suggest that there is a positive association between entrepreneurship skills and some measures of business success. There is evidence that some entrepreneurship skills can be taught and/or learned. However, entrepreneurs tend to learn less effectively from the conventional didactic approaches typical of much of the educational sector. The most effective approaches to developing entrepreneurship skills involve experiential learning based around task-oriented development focused on real business problems.

Basic Entrepreneurship Skills

Thus, entrepreneurial skills development according to Anho (2011) goes beyond training and education. It involves a

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process of human capacities building through formal and/or informal training, inculcating the entrepreneur basic skills such as financial skills, technical skills, creative skills, managerial skills, intellectual skills, marketing skills, communication skills and technological skills. An entrepreneur should also possess some of the following, if not all. Ability to: manage money, raise money, relieve stress, be productive, communication skill, leadership, personal skill, negotiation skill, make entrepreneur friends, identify strengths and weaknesses, hire effective people, train new staff, manage staff, focus on customers, close a sale, spot new trends, deal with failure, risk taker.

With the above mentioned skills, an entrepreneur will find it easier to survive in the business environment. He/she will be able to communicate effectively, relate within and outside the business.

Developing Communities through Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is adopted to develop society and its people. Since its adoption, every state of the country has one way or the other made use of it as a tool to develop the communities and the state at large. Kwara State was created on 27 May 1967, when the Federal Military Government of General Yakubu Gowon broke the four regions that then constituted the Federation of Nigeria into 12 states. At its creation, the state was made up of the former Ilorin and Kabba provinces of the then Northern Region and was initially named the West Central State but later changed to "Kwara", a local name for the River Niger. Kwara State has since 1976 reduced considerably in size as a result of further state creation exercises in Nigeria. On 13 February 1976, the Idah/Dekina part of the state was carved out and merged with a part of the then Benue/Plateau State to form Benue State. On 27 August 1991, five local government areas, namely Oyi, Yagba, Okene, Okehi and Kogi were

also excised to form part of the new Kogi State, while a sixth, Borgu Local Government Area, was merged with Niger State.

As of 2006, the population of Kwarans was 2.37 million based on the Nigeria 2006 Census. This population size constitutes about 1.69% of the Nation's total population having relied upon immigration for population growth and socio-economic development. Kwara State is a state in Nigeria, which falls to the North Central of the geo-political zone. The state has 16 Local Government Areas namely: Asa, Baruten, Edu, Ekiti, Ifelodun, Ilorin East, Ilorin South, Ilorin West, Irepodun, Isin, Kaiama, Moro, Offa, Oke Ero, Oyun, Pategi.

The State Government has embarked on series of entrepreneurship activities so as ensure the level of unemployment is drastically reduced. This has been achieved through the adoption of entrepreneurship as a tool for community development. In 2005/2006, Ajikobi constituency youth wing of Ilorin West L.G.A, empowered the youths through free computer training, hair salon equipment, grinding machine, sewing machine and barbing equipment. This was done to engage them and reduce the level of unemployment in the state. In 2009 as well, the Commissioner of Health distributed a desktop computer to those who have acquired the training of computer but could not establish themselves. In 2013, representative of Ilorin West/Asa L.G.A at the federal level also empowered the youths with the distribution of keke napep, moto-bike, taxi cars and buses. The State Government through the Ministry of Education gives free computer training courses. Several outreaches have been done to different communities, to famers, market woman, senior citizens, widow and widowers. Many have been empowered through Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to improve their standards of living which have developed the community and the state at large.

Entrepreneurship has now introduced to all levels of education in the state, so as to teach entrepreneurial knowledge and skills to the students before leaving the school. With this they will be job providers and not job seekers.

Factors Hindering the Development of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial development takes place within a framework of forces that constitute the system environment, which are either external or internal. A critical issue in the entrepreneurial development and growth is a company's ability to adapt to its strategies to a rapidly changing environment, to which the entrepreneurs' role is critical to the success or failure of such an enterprise (Amadasun, 2003). Onugu (2005) explained that entrepreneurship has played and continues to play significant roles in the growth, development and industrialization of many economies of the world. In the case of Nigeria, Small and Medium Enterprises have performed below expectation due to a combination of problems which ranges from attitude and habits of entrepreneurs themselves through environmental related factors, instability of governments and frequent government policy changes.

Entrepreneurship is influenced by four distinct factors: **economic development, culture, technological development and education**. In areas where these factors are present, you can expect to see strong and consistent entrepreneurial growth. These conditions may have both positive and negative influences on the emergence of entrepreneurship. Positive influences constitute facilitative and conducive conditions for the emergence of entrepreneurship, whereas negative influences create inhibiting milieu to the emergence of entrepreneurship.

Onugu (2005) stated the top ten problem affecting Entrepreneurship in Nigeria, which are: poor management, access to finance, infrastructure, lack of strong patent law, high cost

of doing business, multiple taxes and levies, lack of knowledge in the basic sciences and technology, unfair competition, unstable political system, transportation system, poor government policy, inadequate access to market information and non-availability of raw materials locally.

Prospects of Entrepreneurship as tool for Developing Communities

Since entrepreneurship has been seen has an effective tool for change and development of the people and the society at large. Some of the prospects of entrepreneurship are listed below:

- i. **Employment Generation:** Entrepreneurship and proper business management practices and activities brings about employment creation, since this will result to sitting an industry, a firm, company or an organization in an area, people will definitely be needed to work there.
- ii. **Increased Productivity through Innovation:** This improves and increases the level of productivity, as a result of the diffusion of innovation from a given environment to another.
- iii. **Economy Friendly:** It encourages and sustains economic dynamism that enables an economy to adjust successfully in a rapidly changing global economy.
- iv. **Private:** It increases private sector participation in the manufacturing sector.
- v. **Economy Development:** The developed economies of the world are evidences of the roles entrepreneurship and proper business management practices play in economic development.
- vi. **Creativities:** Enables individuals to use their potentials and energies to create wealthy independence and status for themselves in the society.

- vii. **Capacity Building:** Ensures increased resource utilization.
- viii. **Development:** It's developed both human and society in it adoption.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship is essential for rapid and sustained economic growth and development. It creates the required manpower and skills necessary for accelerated growth, reduce unemployment and poverty. This paper has touched on key issues and challenges entrepreneurship education in Nigeria faces. The issue of entrepreneurship education to any nation especially in developing country like Nigeria is no doubt of paramount importance. Its role in economic growth cannot be underestimated in all ramifications. Entrepreneurship education is a central pillar to economic growth and development, as well as employment generation and poverty alleviation (Nwachukwu & Nwamuo, 2010). It is therefore necessary that aggressive efforts should be made to see to its full development in the country.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the paper makes the following recommendations for effective entrepreneurship in developing communities and creating wealth and employment opportunities.

- The government needs to create an investor-friendly environment encompassing stable small business policies.
- Government need to address urgently the dilapidated infrastructural facilities in the country, starting with the power sector, roads and railways, provide adequate security and give every citizen the sense of belonging.
- There is need to change the mind set of young people to embrace self employment rather than waiting for non-existing government/private industry job.

- There is the need to ensure that those with innovative ideas are provided with the financial support to translate such ideas into reality.
- Youths should be exposed to entrepreneurial training. This will keep them in tune with trends of the society.
- All stakeholders must encourage the proposed introduction of entrepreneurship study across colleges and departments as general courses in Nigerian universities.
- Government should set machinery in motion to provide a conducive environment for entrepreneurship programmes.
- The federal, state and local governments should frequently initiate entrepreneurship programmes such as: empowerment, training and re-training of people, provision of equipment and necessary requirements so as to develop ideas and innovations in the society.

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