

REAPPRAISING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR FUNCTIONALITY AND SELF RELIANCE: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

This paper examined reappraising entrepreneurship education for functionality issues and challenges. The concepts of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education were explained. National educational goals by Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) were enumerated. Importance of reappraising entrepreneurship education for functionality and self reliance were highlighted. Issues concerning reappraising entrepreneurship education for functionality and self-reliance were discussed as re-orientation and orientation of teachers, funding, attitude of the learners, teachers' inefficiency, and lack of strong government policies. Recommendations were made to include: federal and state governments should organize orientation and re-orientation courses, seminars and workshops for teachers and students on the importance of entrepreneurship education.

Introduction

Education is an indispensable veritable tool for national development. Observing this, Ekeh (2007) asserted that education provides the tools with which people are empowered to tackle the problems that face their society. It is the level of education of the members of the society that determines the level of development in that country. This being the case, it is expected that the national policy on education should emphasize acquisition of practical skills which will be utilized both in the present and in future. To that end, Uwameiye and Aduwa-Ogiegbaen (2006) opined that a worth while and sound education should not only meet the challenges of today, but meet future challenges and contribute to creating a future society and its culture. That is why Onyeachu (2009) emphatically remarked that Nigerian education system ought to be

emphasizing entrepreneurship in her education for functionality and self reliance.

This paper is therefore looking into reappraising entrepreneurship education for functionality and self reliance, issues and challenges. This will be treated under the following sub-headings:

1. Concept of entrepreneurship
2. Concept of entrepreneurship education
3. National educational goals as indicated in National Policy on Education (2004)
4. Importance of reappraising entrepreneurship education for functionality and self reliance
5. Issues concerning reappraising entrepreneurship education for functionality and self reliance
6. Recommendations and conclusion.

Concept of Entrepreneurship

The term entrepreneurship has been defined in different ways by different people. Okala (2004) viewed entrepreneurship as a process of planning and organizing small business venture by using, controlling people and resources to create, develop and implement solution to problems of the society. Ekong and Williams (2006) viewed entrepreneurship as acquisition of practical knowledge and skills which are imparted simultaneously for sustenance, self-employment and self-reliance. Discussing the same issue, Uwameiye and Aduwa-Ogiegbaen (2006) defined entrepreneurship as the knowledge, skills and mindset needed to create jobs ("make-a-job) by concerning and starting up new businesses. Eberechukwu (2009) defined entrepreneurship as that which involves empowering individual to be self employed and independent.

From the definitions one can define entrepreneurship as the act of creating and managing business decision and taking financial risk which is geared towards personal development, as well as self-sustenance, self reliance and employment of others. When learners are trained to acquire practical skills in the process of education there will be development hence the need for entrepreneurship in education.

Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education can be viewed as a process of teaching people how to acquire skills through the study of school subjects and how to utilize these skills for self-sustenance and self-reliance. To Nwoko (1997) entrepreneurship is an aspect of education that is geared towards developing in student's skills, ideas and managerial abilities necessary for personal reliance. It is a programme of human capital development. Aduwa-Ogiegbaen (2006:99) defined entrepreneurship education as:

The process of providing individual with concepts and skills to recognize opportunities and skills that others have over looked, and to have the insight, self esteem and knowledge to act where others have hesitated. It includes instruction in opportunity recognition, marshalling resources in the face of risk, and initiating a business venture. It also includes instruction in business management process such as business planning, capital development, market and cash flow analysis.

National Educational Goals as Indicated in National Policy on Education (2004)

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004:7) identified the national educational goals which were derived from the philosophy as:

a) The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;

- b) The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;
- c) The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around;
- d) The acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

The well articulated national educational goals cannot be achieved if Nigerian education system is not emphasizing acquisition of practical skills rather than concentrating on learning concepts and theories. To that end, Onyeachu (2009) emphatically remarked that Nigerian education system requires qualitative education that will be filled up with skill acquisition and utilization of the acquired skills. This underscores the need for reappraising entrepreneurship education for functionality and self reliance.

Importance of Reappraising Entrepreneurship Education for Functionality and Self Reliance.

It is expected that when majority of the Nigerian students have acquired entrepreneurial skills, there will be great improvement in national development. This necessitates the need for constant reappraisal of entrepreneurship education to ascertain the extent of its functionality in terms of making the citizenry to be self-reliant as epitomized in national policy on education where it is documented that, it is the expectation of the policy that Nigerian education system should help the citizens to acquire appropriate skills and to develop mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. To that effect, it is the expectation of the national policy on education that every functional entrepreneurship education should aim at

achieving this functional education that leads to production of self-reliance individual. No wonder, Okala (2004) remarked that, establishment of the benefits of entrepreneurship skills in the area of employment will help to curb youth unemployment. Okala (2004) therefore suggested that, strategies must be put in place to pass this noble idea to the consumers. The consumers are the students of the tertiary school level among others. To that effect, Okala (2004) suggested teacher facilitated classroom activities as a method of imparting entrepreneurial skills to the learners.

Reappraising entrepreneurship education for functionality is also important because entrepreneurship education encourages the ideas of self-employment. Moreover a process of self employment through entrepreneurship in education is an alternative to meet the needs of the people. Entrepreneurship in education will help Nigerian youths to achieve the well cherished desire which is transition from school to work to earn a living. This is because, that values system where every one waits on government or private companies to employ them no longer meets the yearnings and aspirations of every Nigerian. Acquisition of entrepreneurship skills provides profitable opportunities to those who develop these vital important skills. A situation where it is observed that entrepreneurship education is not achieving the objectives of functionality and self-reliance, an improvement has to be made. That is why, it is very essential to reappraise the current national policy on education to ascertain the policy provision for making entrepreneurship education functional.

Issues Concerning Reappraisal Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria for Functionality and Self-Reliance

There are many issues concerning reappraisal entrepreneurship education for functionality and self-reliance. These include

Orientation and Re-Orientation of Nigerian Teachers

It is pertinent to note that Nigerians teachers require proper orientation and re-orientation on the benefits derivable from constant reappraisal of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. This issue needs to be addressed. This is necessary because as Onyeachu (2009) observed both the state and federal government do not give enough orientation and re-orientation on the necessity of making education practical oriented so that learners will become job creators instead of job seekers stating from the period they are still in schools. Values re-orientation is very necessary because as Onyeachu (2008) observed, for any nation to develop there must be strict compliance to the values of such society.

Funding

Fund refers to money. As Onyeachu (2006) observed, no organization functions effectively without fund. Fund is one of the things that need to be addressed while reappraising entrepreneurship education for functionality and self reliance. This is because with fund materials, instruments and equipments needed for testing learners on the extent they have acquired the practical skills can be bought. Funds are necessary because entrepreneurship in education requires fund for teaching practical skills in every subject.

National Policy

Policy provision as it affects entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is not enough. Therefore a re-visit to the policy on the aspect of entrepreneurship education is needed.

Attitude of the Learners

Most learners show negative attitudes towards acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. One may ask what is to be done so that learners will show positive attitude towards acquisition of

practical skills. The federal government through her National policy on education is challenged to recommend the incentives meant for learners that acquired the entrepreneurial skills faster than others.

Teachers' Inefficiency

Teachers do not emphasize practical aspects of the subject they teach. This is a cog on the wheel of entrepreneurship education. It is through reappraisal of entrepreneurship education for functionality that this issue will be addressed. State and federal government are challenged to look at this.

Lack of Strong Government Policies

Lack of strong government policies on acquisition of entrepreneurship skills is another issue that needs to be addressed. People take things very serious when there is a very strong policy emphasizing its implementation. This is a challenge to the federal government.

Not Using Successful Entrepreneurs

The current national policy on education do not emphasize the use of successful entrepreneurs as resource persons to teach the importance of entrepreneurship education. This need to be reappraised for functionality and self reliance.

Conclusion

Federal and state governments as well as school administrators, teachers, parents and renowned entrepreneurs should put their heads and hand together towards promoting entrepreneurship education for functionality and self reliance. Doing this will lead to acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies required for the survival of the individual so that the individual will live comfortably and contribute to the development of the society as recommended by federal

government through her National policy on education (2004).

Recommendations

To make entrepreneurship education functional and self reliance the following recommendations are made:

1. Both the state and federal government should organize orientation and re-orientation courses for teachers and students on the importance of entrepreneurship education for it promotes functionality and self-reliance
2. Every state government and even school administrators should invite successful entrepreneurs as resource persons to teach the students how to acquire entrepreneurial skills and the importance of entrepreneurship education.
3. Both the federal and state government as well as parents should provide fund for teaching of practical skills involved in entrepreneurship education. Doing this will promote acquisition of entrepreneurial skills.
4. The national policy on education should emphasize entrepreneurship education in the curriculum of every subject in all levels of education and ensure its effective implementation.
5. Teachers who emphasize acquisition and utilization of practical skills in their subjects for individuals to live a self reliant life should be rewarded.

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Reappraising Entrepreneurship Education for Functionality and Self Reliance: Issues and Challenges

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