

ENTREPRENEURIAL AND FUNCTIONAL PHYSICAL EDUCATION AS A MEANS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN STATES

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Abstract

One of the aims of higher education is the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of society as well as acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value-orientation for the survival of the individual in the society . This paper explains the meaning of entrepreneurship and functional education; identifies the contributions of entrepreneurship education towards economic development of a nation, highlights strategies for developing entrepreneurial skills in physical education and identifies and explains entrepreneurial opportunities in various areas of physical education for the attainment of economic development.

Key words: Entrepreneurship, Functional Physical Education, Economic Development.

The realities of the present international economic order by way of marked disparities in the level of development between the advanced and industrialized nations and the less developed third world countries is traceable not to differences in national resources endowment, not from differences in innate intellectual endowment, but from the great inequalities in the range and level of knowledge and skills in use (Bamidele, 2004: 2). Similarly, Kingble (2008: 39) posited that economic and social prosperity of

any nation in this 21st century depends on the ability of such nation to educate members of the society to be prepared to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

The advanced industrialized Euro-American countries such as the United States of America, Germany, Australia, Canada, France, among others, have attend this feats because of the fact that their educational policies emphasise on all-round functional education. Equally, the growing economy of the ‘Asian Tigers’ such as China, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, among others is the sound and quality education that equip their citizens with saleable skills for effective functioning in their societies. Therefore, as African countries are yearning for rapid socio-economic and technological development, entrepreneurial and functional physical education no doubt is a panacea to the attainment of these needs.

What is Entrepreneurship and Functional Education?

Entrepreneurship is a concept that has attracted a lot of attention especially now that there is scarcity of paid employment. Many scholars have given various definitions of entrepreneurship. Gana (2011:2), defined entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of an individual to seek for investment opportunities in an environment and be able to establish and run enterprise successful based on the identified opportunities. The United Nations Development Project (UNDP),(1991:1) posited that entrepreneurship is the process of using private initiative to transform a business concept into a new venture or to grow and diversify an existing venture or enterprise with high growth potential. From these definitions entrepreneurship can be seen as the acquisition of skills, ideas and managerial ability necessary for personal self-reliance.

Functional education is the type of education that prepares a citizen for life as a productive and consuming number of the society. Alio & Ezeamenyi (2007:8) claimed that such education exposes students to the realities of their environment and adequately prepares them for effective living in the environment which is more often than not hostile. Functional education is a sharp contrast to academic education. For example, the curriculum of academic education is bookish oriented towards higher levels of education and are beyond the reach of majority of people. Academic education is divorced from the life and culture of the local people and consequently is not suitable for preparing the child for life in his own community (Onwuzo & Okpaka, 2011:12).

A look at our educational practice seems to suggest that we are still upholding academic education which has resulted to high rate of unemployment of graduates in African countries. If African countries are really out to achieve economic development, entrepreneurship and functional physical education should be adopted as a matter of urgency. Physical education is considered to be that phase of education that aims through physical activities such as games, sports, calisthenics, gymnastics, dance and

related activities to make the maximum contribution to the optimum development of the individual's potentialities (Ladani, 1994:3). This means that physical education hinge on entrepreneurship and functionality.

In advanced and industrialized countries such as the United States of America, Germany, Great Britain and Soviet Union, among others, physical education serves the purpose of preparing students/youths for life. Physical education in these countries has become an important survival element in improving life, creating jobs and wealth. However, many youths in Africa, who have received training in physical education, are roaming about the streets unemployed. Many of these youths are now engaging themselves in all sort of social vices as a means of survival. The incidences of armed robbery, kidnapping, assassination and terrorism are happening at an alarming rate in Africa. African countries in this present situation can change the ugly trends by providing entrepreneurial and functional physical education.

Entrepreneurship and Economic Development of a Nation

Entrepreneurship can contribute in a wide range of ways to the economic development of a nation. Ray (1988:6) identified the following contributions of entrepreneurship to economic development.

1. Entrepreneurship raises productivity through technical and others forms of innovation;
2. Entrepreneurship is a powerful tool of job creation;
3. Entrepreneurship facilitates the transfer of technology;
4. Entrepreneurship plays a strategic role in restructuring and transformation of economies;
5. Entrepreneurship plays a critical role in restructuring and transformation of economies;
6. Entrepreneurship helps to reduce the ossification of economic power;
7. Entrepreneurship makes market more competitive and thereby reduces both static dynamic market inefficiencies;
8. Entrepreneurship improves the social welfare of a country by harnessing dormant previously overlooked talents; and
9. Entrepreneurship creates new market and facilities expansion into international market.

Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Physical Education

There are quite a number of entrepreneurial opportunities which graduates of physical education can establish businesses in their area of choice. These include physical fitness centre training, managing sport club/athlete, sports officiating, and sports coaching.

Physical Fitness Centre Training

There are different types of physical activities that can be performed in fitness centres. These physical activities are aimed at cultivating power and capability in individuals which enable the individuals maintain bodily conditions in the best-working order while at the same time provide for greater efficiency of intellectual and spiritual life. An individual can set up a fitness centre to render services to individuals, households and the general public. By so doing the individual becomes self employed; improving his economic status which consequently fosters economic development.

Managing Sport Club/athlete

Sports management is an aspect of physical education which deals with the application of various theories to planning and execution of sports programmes in sport organizations. It is the process by which human, financial, material and physical resources in various sports organizations are harnessed to accomplish the goal of the organization sports wise. With the managerial knowledge and skills acquired in physical education, an individual is in a better position to establish and manage private sport club/athlete from amateurism to professionalism.

Sports Officiating

Officiating is an act of controlling sports competitions in accordance with the approved rules and regulations, ensure equity and fair play, enforce discipline, sanctioned misconducts according to the gravity of offence committed, among others. This means that the services of officiating officials in sports competitions cannot be underestimated. Sports officiating skills learnt in physical education provide employment opportunities for individuals during organized sports competitions at the local, state and federal levels.

Sports Coaching

The act of coaching is to prepare sport team/athlete in the art of skills, techniques and strategies for excelling in sports. Through physical education, individual learn skills, techniques and strategies of different sports and games which can enable the individual to organize coaching clinics and equally set up sport academy.

Strategies for Developing Entrepreneurial Skills in Physical Education

Entrepreneurial skills are relevant skills and competencies that enable an individual seek and run enterprise successfully. Olibe & Obidike (2008:14) asserted that entrepreneurial skills consist of effective utilization of ideas, information and facts that help a learner develop companies, marketing, services or being productive employees of organizations. Therefore, entrepreneurial skills in physical education can be developed through the following;

- 1 Exposing students to practical work experience situation in order to be proficient in any job they may be working towards.

- 2 Physical education teachers who supposedly possess the characteristics of an entrepreneur should instil in students the life of commitment to work; motivation; taking risk; making power of decision on financial situation, endurance, power of creating cooperation and taking personal responsibilities. It is hoped that when these characteristics are taught, it would help an individual to discover areas of his deficiencies and with training and practical work, acquire the necessary skills needed.
- 3 Physical education department should be made to run consultancy outfits or services, oriented workshops in fitness training, coaching and officiating among others. This requires that every student before graduation would be made to function as a trainee, learning skills and lastly function as a manager of an enterprise.

Conclusion

In this era of global economic recession, any graduate that is waiting to secure government job is wasting his/her time. Individuals that have acquire entrepreneurship and functional physical education can create job for themselves as well as for others. By so doing, individuals become self employed, improving their economic status and consequently the economic development of the state or country at large.

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