
ADVANCING ENTREPRENEURIAL KNOWLEDGE THROUGH RE-ENGINEERING SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study on advancing Entrepreneurial knowledge through re-engineering Social Studies Education is aimed at providing the needed information on how knowledge acquired through the process of teaching and learning of Social Studies Education can be converted into an effective resource used in entrepreneurship development and the production of tangible goods. This paper sees Social Studies Education as a knowledge-base discipline where skills and abilities needed to bridge the gap between man and the system that produce goods and services is transmitted from the teacher to students. It goes further to define knowledge entrepreneurship as developed by Harvey & Knight (1996) as the ability of man to translate knowledge capital (resource) to capital goods that can be sold and bought. The paper concludes by asserting that entrepreneurial knowledge is the bedrock for entrepreneurial skills development, industrialization and sustainable national development and growth. Recommendations on how to advance entrepreneurial knowledge through re-engineering Social Studies Education are proffered.

Human societies all over the world today are faced with the great challenge of providing adequate information and knowledge needed for the survival of the human race and sustained growth of man's environment. This challenge includes the need to move human societies from consumption economy to production economy for effective satisfaction of the growing population both in goods and in services. This change of focus can only be made possible through Education which Owo (1994) in Iwegbu & Okobia (2009) described as the total process of human learning by which knowledge is impacted, faculties trained and skills developed. This knowledge gained by man through the process of education which is specifically meant to transform human mind is the only sure way to redirect human focus from consumption to production of goods

and services. Social Studies Education is not divorced from this laudable task of redirecting human mind towards production for the satisfaction of man.

Social Studies according to Ukadike (2003) is relatively new in Nigerian secondary schools. He further asserted that Social Studies gained momentum as a school subject from 1977 especially after the introduction of the new National Policy on Education (NPE) and the 6-3-3-4 system of Education. The new National Policy on Education in Nigeria introduced by the Federal Government and other state commissions was intended to eliminate the various flaws and bias inherited from the imposed British philosophy of education as they no longer meet the needs of an independent Nigeria. In January 1977 according to Wikipedia, the Nigerian government issued a policy statement on education which contained the government's views on the philosophy of Nigerian education from Pre School through the university levels.

The specific national aims and objectives to which the philosophy is linked as quoted by Odor & Nwaham (2005) are:

1. The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
2. The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of individual and the Nigerian society;
3. The training of the mind in the understanding of the world;
4. The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences, both mental and physical, as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society.

Since the introduction of this education policy in Nigeria, several other policies meant to strengthen education in the country have been initiated. A very good example of these policies is the 6-3-3-4 system of Education. This policy means that education in Nigeria will be based on 6-3-3-4 system, which involves three levels of institutional learning processes;

- i. 6 years Basic Primary Education
- ii. 3 years Junior Secondary Education
- iii. 3 years Senior Secondary Education
- iv. 4 years Tertiary Education

Other educational policies in Nigeria by previous government include Universal Primary Education (UPE), Universal Basic Education (UBE) etc. The present President Goodluck Jonathan's Government is currently proposing another educational policy tagged 9-3-3-4 system of education. The implication of this policy is that basic primary education will now run for 9 years. Inconsistency of educational policies has become a major challenge in the Nigerian educational system. The major relationship between all educational policies in Nigeria both past and present is that all the policies are intended to improve the quality of education in Nigeria, for better service delivery. Fadeiye (2005) saw Social Studies Education as the study of man as he interacts with his different environments. These environments according to him, could be physical, social, political, economic or cultural. The subject also entails how

man influences his environment with a view to getting maximum benefits from it. It also deals with how the environment influences man in return. Awe (1976) in Fadeyiye (2005) saw Social Studies Education as a problem-solving discipline. She declared that:

“Social Studies as a discipline if properly programmed and effectively taught, should help to solve social problems that are facing developing countries like ours (Nigeria) where the old norms are fast losing their grips and no effective substitutes to replace them”.

Comparative Education Studies and Adaptation Center (1979) in Fadeyiye (2005) defined Social Studies as a relationship between man and his physical and social environment as well as his relationship between science and technology. In conceptualizing Social Studies amidst array of definitions Mezieobi, Fubura & Mezieobi (2008) simply defined Social Studies as an integrative field of study which probes man’s symbiotic relationships with his environments, endows man with the reflective or contemplative capacities, intellectual, affective, social and work skills to enable him understand his world and its problems, and to rationally solve or cope with them for effective living in the society. In a nutshell, Social Studies Education in today’s world is expected to impact on man relevant knowledge, skills and abilities needed to deal with societal challenges. To achieve this goal, Social Studies curriculum has been developed to incorporate as one of its objectives “development of capacity to learn and to acquire certain basic skills of hand and head together with those of observation” (Odor & Nwaham, 2005).

The Concept of Entrepreneurial Knowledge

Social studies Education is not a discipline where tools and machines are used to enhance industrialization and productive ventures but an intellectual hall-mark where knowledge is developed and faculties trained to be used as capital in bridging the gap between man and the system that produces goods and services. The need to transform knowledge resource to organizational management and capital goods gave rise to entrepreneurial knowledge. Entrepreneur knowledge or knowledge entrepreneur as a concept was developed by Harvey & Knight (1996) in their attempt to advance ways of converting knowledge capital (resource) to tangible industrial capital that will proficiently enhance entrepreneurship skills and abilities needed for full capacity production of goods and services. Before the advent of knowledge entrepreneur, the key word for total industrialization of human environment was “entrepreneur/entrepreneurial”. Hornby (2001) defined entrepreneur as a person who makes money by starting or running a business, especially, when it involves taking financial risks.

Following, Clark, (1998 & 2004) “entrepreneurial” can be used as a characteristic not only applied to individuals, but to organizations as social system as well as to projects.

Entrepreneurship in the whole world is the key to industrialization and enhanced production process. It is the pivot of economic advancement and growth of any nation. It is the act of pursuing new ways of doing things. According to Brown &

Ulijn (2004) entrepreneurship is a process of exploiting opportunities that exist in the environment or that are created through innovation in an attempt to create value.

Entrepreneurial knowledge otherwise known as knowledge entrepreneurship describes the ability to recognize or create an opportunity and take action aimed at realizing the innovative knowledge practice or product. Knowledge entrepreneurship is different from “traditional” economic entrepreneurship in that it does not aim at the realization of monetary profits, but focuses on opportunities with the goal to improve production (research) and personal transformation (Harvey & Knight, 1996).

According to Stan (2006), a knowledge entrepreneur is someone who is skilled at creating and using intellectual assets for the development of new ventures or services that will lead to personal and community wealth creation or to improve and enhance service. The knowledge entrepreneur must have sufficient personal knowledge capital to be able to create value and/or wealth through the use of that knowledge capital gained through the process of education whether formal, semi-formal or informal.

The knowledge entrepreneur identifying and realizing an opportunity, rather than exploiting existing intellectual capital is the motivating factor. Rowley (2000) in her understanding of an organization that is a knowledge entrepreneur based, recognized the multi-faceted nature of knowledge and the implication this has for organizational learning and progress. Specifically, according to her, a knowledge entrepreneur understands how to interface organizational learning and systems evolution in such a way as to optimize and capitalize on its knowledge resources in pursuit of its vision. This understanding expresses the role of knowledge entrepreneurship in a different way but interesting in the pursuit of organizational goal. Rowley (2000) asserted that knowledge entrepreneurship serves to build bridges between people and system that produce goods and services.

Knowledge entrepreneur is the foundation of any organizational and industrial excellence in the manufacturing of goods and services. Knowledge entrepreneur is appreciated based on their ability to think, imagine, exploit, execute, and use the results of research to develop original knowledge, skills and attitude (KSA) that will enhance industrial and organizational success.

Using McDonald (2002) model of knowledge entrepreneurship, Senge (2007) identified three major factors that may directly influence knowledge entrepreneurship ability; these are:-

- i. **Environmental Awareness:** This, according to Senge (2007), describes with what practices and with what intensity the organization gathers information about its external and internal environment.
- ii. **Attitude Towards Risk:** This has a great influence on knowledge entrepreneurship ability. Attitude towards the risks inherent in the pursuit of all innovations is captured under the concept of risk tolerance. This, according to Senge (2007), is used to replace “analytical diligence” which originally was part of McDonald’s model of knowledge entrepreneur developed in 2002.

iii. **Communication:** Communication is the last variable taken into consideration as a major influence for knowledge entrepreneurship. The organizational style of communication and the richness of communication channels according to Senge (2007) are evaluated here.

On the output side, knowledge entrepreneurship is set to improve innovativeness thereby, indirectly improve performance in the production process.

An Organigram of Knowledge Entrepreneurship

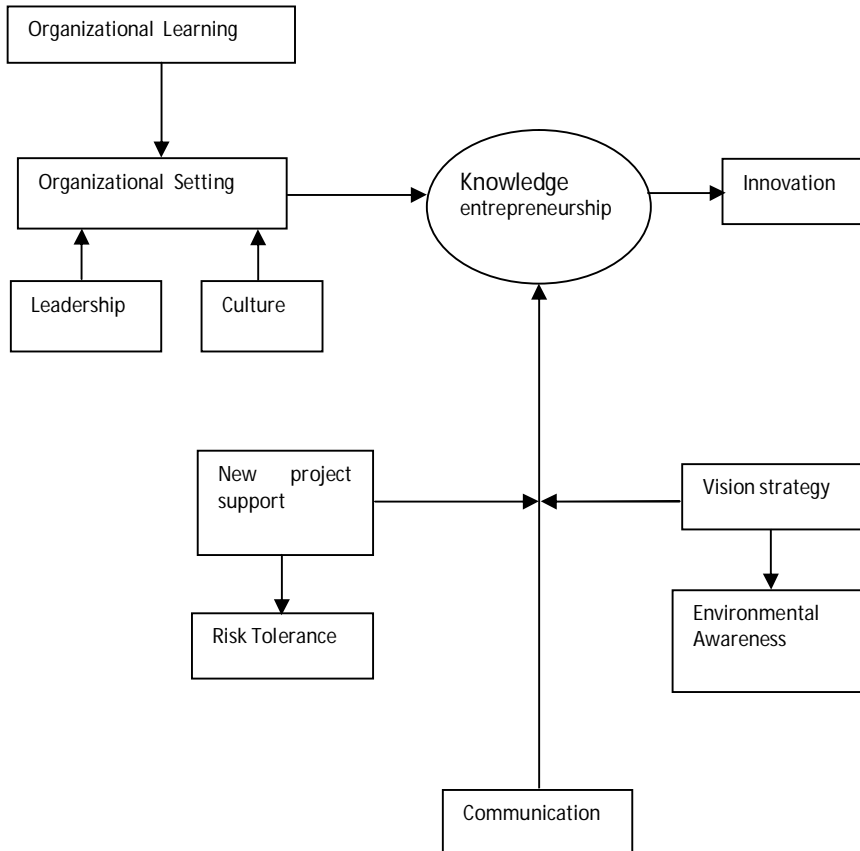


Figure 1:

McDonald Model (2002). Adopted from Senge (2007), P.hD Thesis.

Source: Wikipedia

The Role of Social Studies Education in Advancing Entrepreneurial Knowledge

Social Studies Education as a knowledge-based discipline has an indispensable role to play towards advancing entrepreneurial knowledge in any society to improve productivity and employability. Employability according to Hillage & Pollard (1998) is a person’s capability for gaining and maintaining employment. They further stressed that individual’s employability depends on the knowledge, skills and ability (KSA) they

possess. This knowledge referred to as “knowledge entrepreneurship”, skills and abilities can be developed in individuals during Social Studies instructional process in classrooms; during Social Studies conferences, workshop, seminars and symposiums.

This knowledge entrepreneurship and “employability assets” comprise of an individual’s knowledge (i.e. what they know) gain from Social Studies teaching and learning process, skills (what they do with what they know) and attitudes (how they do what they do). Knowledge entrepreneurship is more than merely being in possession of employer-relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes; it involves an individual’s ability to move towards self sufficiency and self reliance in this modern day labour market and the economy at large.

Social Studies Education through its teaching and learning process in both classroom and outside classroom situations should be able to develop in the individuals the capabilities to exploit their assets (knowledge), to market them and sell them towards the attainment of sustainable national development and growth, if it must remain relevant in the Nigerian transformation agenda.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Achieving knowledge entrepreneurship through re-engineering or Social Studies Education is a panacea towards attaining economic turn-around in an emerging economy. Re-engineering Social Studies Education does not only advance the course of knowledge entrepreneurship but also inculcate life skills and personal skills which individuals and societies need for total transformation and economic sustainability.

For the re-engineered Social Studies Education to achieve functional knowledge entrepreneurship there is the urgent need to:

- a. infuse knowledge entrepreneurship education into SOCIAL STUDIES curriculum
- b. train and re-train social studies teachers to acquire the needed skills to effectively teach knowledge entrepreneurship in Social Studies class,
- c. develop effective methodologies for teaching the re-engineered Social Studies Education to achieve the goal of knowledge entrepreneurship,
- d. develop functional instructional resources for the teaching and learning of the re-engineered Social Studies Education to achieve the goal of knowledge entrepreneurship,
- e. develop alternative ways of financing the re-engineered Social Studies Education,
- f. facilitate total computerization of the re-engineered Social Studies Education programmes,
- g. develop effective means of evaluating the progress made in the attainment of the instructional objectives of the re-engineered Social Studies Education and,
- h. Strengthen the machineries for Social Studies regular conferences and workshops were further skills will be developed and faculties trained.

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