

ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION: A SINE QUA NON FOR CREATIVE CURRICULUM AND SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

By

Dr. Christiana .N. Nwadiokwu

*Department of Curriculum Studies
And Educational Technology,
School of Education,
College of Education, Agbor
Delta State*

Abstract

The paper discussed the need for entrepreneurial skills which will equip students for self-reliant. It is not a debate that economic development and sustainability are hinged on creativity and innovation which are the defining features of entrepreneurial education. This paper examined the meaning and objectives of entrepreneurship education, educational Policy, theories, creative curriculum, sustainable development, challenges of Entrepreneurial education in Nigeria and possible solutions. Based on the above and other ancillary discourses, the paper recommended amongst others that: education programmes at all levels should be made relevant to provide the youth with the needed entrepreneurial skills, that there should be a call on all relevant authorities to make fresh commitment towards entrepreneurial development by refocusing the education policy towards entrepreneurially eliciting programmes.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Education, creative curriculum, sustainable development, Nigeria.

Entrepreneurship is a concept that involves mental activities such as creativity, innovativeness and proactiveness while entrepreneurship education is designed to communicate and inculcate competencies, skills and values needed to recognize business opportunity, organize and start new business venture.

Entrepreneurship is becoming a focal point for the various economies of the world as a result of its potency to greatly influence economic growth and development through entrepreneurial drive and persistence (Kuratko, 2013). Nigeria cannot sit back and watch other nations make progress in the common quest for economic independence; being able to deal with the problem of unemployment, poverty and other related socio-economic challenges. The fact that Nigeria has remained a developing economy for this long has even made urgent, the need to fully embrace the 'letter and spirit' of entrepreneurship by all individuals and institutions.

Accordingly, poverty eradication and employment generation have been top priorities of many governments and institutions in developing countries (MDGs report in Garba, 2010). These problems appear to be getting worse by the day as hundreds of thousands of graduates are churned out annually from the various Nigerian institutions of higher learning. Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in the growth of an economy. Entrepreneurship development has been accepted as one of the strategy to achieve the objective of promotion of entrepreneurship towards solving the problem of unemployment and rapid industrialization (Arogundade 2011.). The development of small and medium industries has been accepted as one of the most significant and important characteristics of industrial development in India.

Concept of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship has been defined by many authors. Gana (2011) defined it as willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities in an environment and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on identified opportunities. Entrepreneurship refers to the intentional creation of transformation of an organization for the purpose of creating or adding value through organization of resources (Bateman and Snell, 2011). The concept is seen as the dynamic process of creating wealth by individuals who assume the risks involved in providing value for some products and/or services (Kuratko, 2013). Entrepreneurship has also been defined as the process of performing the roles of planning, operating and assuming the risk of a business venture and the pursuit of lucrative opportunities by enterprising individuals (being) inherently about innovation - creating a new venture where one did not exist before (Inegbenebor, 2012).

Concept of Entrepreneurship Education.

Entrepreneurial education is focused on developing youths as well as individuals with passion and multiple skills (Izedonmi&Okafor, 2010). It aims at reducing the risks associated with entrepreneurship thought and guide the enterprise successfully through its initial stage to the maturity stage. According to Ayo (2016), entrepreneurial education is designed to communicate and inculcate competencies, skills and values needed to recognize business opportunity, organize and start new business venture. Entrepreneurship education has to do with encouraging, inspiring children, youths and elders on how to be independent both in thinking and creativity in business (Mandara, 2012).

Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education according to Pekun (2014), aims at achieving the following objectives: to provide the youth with positive attitudes for national critical thinking and timely decision making; to clear vision, generation of progressive ideals, drive and passion for success; to inculcate in the youths, ability to convert vision in concrete reality; to provide the young graduates the willingness to learn and develop a small scale business to reduce poverty to the barest minimum, to reduce migration of the

youth and to be prudent in the management of resources especially finance.

Educational Policy in Nigeria and Entrepreneurship

According to Garba (2010); "... the educational policy then was geared towards serving the interest of the colonial masters in terms of supply of manpower for their effective administration of Nigeria Colony...." The policy was, undoubtedly, aimed at producing Nigerians who could read and write to become clerks, inspectors and the likes without any entrepreneurial skill to stand on their own or even establish and manage their own ventures. It has been asserted that there was a neglect of entrepreneurial development, especially at the micro level as the education policy of colonial and the immediate post-colonial governments emphasized a fitting for 'white collar' jobs (Garba, 2010). Incidentally, getting these jobs was not a problem then, as numerous job openings awaited the yet-to-graduate Nigerians.

However, as economic realities began to unfold, the Nigerian government decided to encourage the informal industrial sector by establishing institutions like Nigeria Industrial Bank (NIB), Nigeria Agricultural and Cooperative Bank (NACB), and many others. Two of such policies worth-looking at are discussed below: *National Policy on Education (1981)*: No doubt, Nigeria was beginning to grapple with the reality of insufficient placements for the emerging vast army of unemployed youths. Hence, the attempt was made to link the 1981 policy with emphasis on self employment. However, this policy has been criticized for having a focus only on the primary and post-primary education. What this meant was that Nigerians who could proceed to tertiary institutions were not to be so shaped for self development. The higher education policy was left to develop both middle and higher levels man power for the 'supposed' industries. In an attempt to find solution for the lingering problems, technical and vocational studies received a boost from the government in recent times.

National Policy on Education (2004): Emphasis was focused on technical and vocational education in this policy. Attention was given to these areas by the Federal and State governments. Garba (2010) observed that this commitment was demonstrated by the establishment of different institutions to offer programmes leading to the acquisition of practical and applied skills. He summarized the aims of technical education as follows: providing trained manpower in applied science, technology and commerce, particularly at sub-professional grades; providing the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development; raising people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution of environmental problems for the use and convenience of man; giving an introduction to professional studies in engineering and other technology; giving training and impacting the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant; and enabling young men and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology.

On the basis of this policy, Garba (2010), stated that "emphasis is on skill-acquisition and sound scientific knowledge, which gives ability to the use of hand and

machine for the purpose of production, maintenance and self-reliant [sic].” It is noteworthy that these policies, notwithstanding, the Nigerian problem of unemployment has remained largely unabated. To this end, it appears that emphasis on technical and vocational education may not be the ‘glorified’ panacea to the problem. Hence, entrepreneurship education, as a way out, has spread rapidly in Universities and Polytechnics across the world and Nigeria is not left behind. In the words of Inegbenebor (2012), “Nigerian Universities have committed themselves to producing entrepreneurial graduates as their contribution to stimulating private sector growth in Nigeria.” The summary of objectives pursued by these various institutions, as stated by Inegbenebor (2012) include; to: change the perception of students of entrepreneurship by introducing them to the nature, role and scope of entrepreneurship; show students how to behave entrepreneurially; and build skills in various areas such as negotiation, networking, new products development, creative thinking, sources of ventures capital, entrepreneurial career options and the likes.

Theories of Entrepreneurship

There are many theories that present the main trust of the entrepreneurial views of the proponents. According to Ejere (2012), some of these theory are:

- *Schumpeter’s Theory*: This theory opined that economic activities occur through a dynamic process of the *business cycle*. The supply of entrepreneurship, according to this theory is a function of the rate of profit and the social climate, which is to say that a vibrant profitable economy encourages entrepreneurship while a depressed economy discourages entrepreneurship. One important thing here is that, if a purposeful and qualitative policy on education is pursued for skill acquisition, Schumpeter’s Theory will encourage entrepreneurship.
- *Inkele’s and Smith’s Need to Improve Theory*: This theory identifies disposition to accept new ideas and try new methods, a time sense that makes a person more interested in the present and future than in the past as attitudes which directly or indirectly affect entrepreneurship development. People with these characteristics are considered more disposed to entrepreneurial activities than those without such characteristics.
- *Drucker’s Creative Imitation Theory*: The approach views entrepreneurship differently from the Schumpeterian view. To the creative imitation theorist, entrepreneurs in the less developed countries merely imitate the products and production process that have been invented in the developed countries rather than being truly innovators. The underlining factor in this theory is change - a search for response to and exploitation of it as an opportunity.
- *The Economic Survival Theory*: The theory explains that entrepreneurship is favoured by those affected by certain unpalatable situations of life. This is also in line with the Shapero’s life path change model of new venture creation, which considers these situations as push factors. Hence, for survival, such people whose jobs are terminated, are victims of discrimination, are widowed/divorced or are dissatisfied take easily to entrepreneurship.

Creative Curriculum for Entrepreneurial Skills

The directives of the Nigerian government through the NUC to integrate entrepreneurship courses into the curriculum of Nigerian universities is a right call and at the right time since entrepreneurship education will provide additional skills, resources, and methodologies to graduates to further transform their ideas into visible and viable businesses after graduating from the university. If this is rightly done, the graduates would not need to queue up in the labour market for paid employment but rather create jobs for themselves and others. This will go a long way to reduce poverty in the society and unemployment in the labour market (Amoor, 2008). It is a well-known fact that, Entrepreneurship constitutes a vital engine for economic, social, practical and all round development of any country. It has been identified by many; both globally and nationally; as a tool for a sustainable, virile and stable economy. In order to implement entrepreneurship education, the government through the NUC inaugurates a committee towards developing entrepreneurship education curriculum which is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Entrepreneurship education and creative curriculum in the transformation and gender in Nigeria

S/No	Module	Student's Expectation
1	Business creation and growth	explain the concept of business planning process Understand contents and reasons for a business plan List some factors that motivate people to begin new businesses Search for and identify business opportunities Understand the required legal formalities for a business start up Prepare a feasibility analysis report State the relationship between a feasibility analysis and a business plan List formal and informal sources of capital for new ventures Know how to and be interested in starting a small business of their own
2	Issues of business growth	Understood the concept of business growth Explored the strategies for growth (franchising, buy in and buy out) Examined merger and acquisitions Discussed the challenges of growth Learnt critical success factors for growing venture
3	Sources of funds	Discussed the sources of funds for new and entrepreneurial ventures Understood the importance of formal and informal sources of funds for new ventures Explored the concept, method, and types of finances provided by venture capital Discussed the various government initiatives in funding new ventures and small and medium enterprises in Nigeria
4	Entrepreneurial Marketing	Understood the concept of small marketing and how it aids the development and growth of small businesses Learnt the major differences between small business marketing and marketing for large organizations Understood the pillars upon which marketing rests (marketing mix) and how they are deployed in new ventures Learnt the importance of developing a unique selling proposition and how it helps to endear customers to the products and services of new firms
	<i>Academic Excellence</i>	Understood the concept of International marketing and its dynamics
5	New opportunities for expansion (e-business)	Describe E-Commerce, E-business and related technologies Define e-Commerce and describe how it differs from e-business

		Describe the major types of e-Commerce/e-Business Discuss in a practical way the application of these techniques in real business Determine the requirement (hardware and software) for a small e-Commerce web site, Identify unique features and business significance of e-commerce technology Examine the challenges and prospect of e-Commerce in Nigeria
6	Ethics and social responsibility	Understood the concepts of business ethics and social responsibility Learnt the ethical principles for entrepreneurs Understood the importance of ethics in business Discussed the application of the above concepts to the operations and success of ventures Discussed social responsibility among business organizations in Nigeria

Source: Draft copy of general entrepreneurship courses in universities edited by Sagagi, Anyanwu, Aliu&Abimbola(2012).

Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development requires balancing environmental, societal and economic considerations in the pursuit of development and an improved quality of life. Sustainability includes intergenerational equity, gender equity, just and peaceful societies, social tolerance, environmental preservation and restoration, poverty alleviation and natural resource conservation. The major essential tool for achieving sustainable development include the following: improving the quality of basic education; re-orienting existing education programme in order to address sustainable development; developing public awareness and understanding; and providing training to all sectors of private and civic society (Banabo and Ndiomu, 2011).

Entrepreneurship Education and Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Nigerian government seems to have woken up to the reality that the country needs to break away from the vicious cycle of poverty, infrastructure neglect, corruption and other social problems (Arogundale, 2011). This is because 45 years after independence. Nigeria has not attained her optimum level of development. Many individuals have difficulties in translating their business ideas to realities and creating new business ventures because of lack of necessary information and skills needed to achieve their targets (Brown, 2012). To him, the University Curriculum was in the past oriented towards making graduate suitable only for white collar jobs. This underscores why millions of our youths and a lot of University graduates roam about the streets of the major cities and towns in search of white –collar jobs. It is necessary and possible to position Nigerian Universities to stimulate economic growth through a deliberate agenda of production of entrepreneurial graduates.

Where is Nigeria in this history of entrepreneurship education? While career education has continued to thrive in many societies, this area has been neglected in Nigeria (Vanguard, Dec. 23, 2004). No wonder why things are not working as they

should in Nigeria. Unfortunately those who influence education policy in Nigeria (Legislators, Educators, the media and so on) disappear to feel that graduates of technical vocational institutions are not equal to University graduates; hence there is need for effective strategies for entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.

Challenges of Entrepreneurial Education in Nigeria and Possible Solutions

Entrepreneurship in Nigeria is tainted with a plethora of problems. These problems, as highlighted in Inegbenebor (2012) are presented below together with the perceived solutions.

- ***Students' Orientation:***The place of passion is critical in cultivating and promoting entrepreneurial spirit in students. This follows that a passionate and committed student of entrepreneurship may end up taking the course as a career goal. Entrepreneurship, as it is today, is not taken by many as a vocational course of study in Nigeria, rather, wage earning is favoured. This is a challenge to the field. To stimulate students' interest in this line, a design of entrepreneurship education with significant promotional content as well as an enabling environment is needed for that purpose.
- ***Orientation of Schools Administration:*** At present, many schools' administrators are yet to appreciate the value and potential of entrepreneurship education in the development of the nation, hence, no real support is articulated by them. There is, therefore, a need for the leadership of schools to reorient themselves towards entrepreneurship development. Practical steps towards result-oriented entrepreneurship can only be achieved in schools only when school administrators themselves know and promote activities of entrepreneurial development. The National Universities Commission (NUC) and National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) should go beyond prescribing the minimum academics standards with respect to entrepreneurship education to organizing seminars and workshops with the aim of enhancing the knowledge of school administrators in this area.
- ***What to Teach:*** What to teach depends on the overall aim that a given entrepreneurship education programme seeks to achieve. There is need for entrepreneurship teachers, educators and practitioners to brainstorm for the purpose of generating ideas about what to teach given the socio- economic peculiarity of Nigeria.
- ***How to Teach:*** How to teach entrepreneurship addresses the issues of how best to stimulate students' interest in entrepreneurship, how best to transfer information, skill and attitudes relevant for successful venture creation and sustenance. Researchers have found widespread use of designing skills in entrepreneurial education in most schools (Inegbenebor, 2012).
- ***Who is to Teach Entrepreneurship?*** Special training and experience are required for the purpose of teaching entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship teachers and facilitators should, as a matter of policy, be made to acquire the requisite knowledge, skills and expertise for this purpose.

- **Teaching Facilities:** Materials to aid the learning process of entrepreneurship in Nigerian institutions are not adequate, in the real sense of it. Entrepreneurship has, to this day, remained largely the same as other subjects in terms of delivery. There should be hand-on teaching materials and equipment to aid learning process in the various institutions.
- **Capacity Building Centres:** As alluded to in the point above, centres for capacity building, where the intending entrepreneur is made to have hands-on experience are not adequate, if they ever exist in Nigeria. Incidentally, entrepreneurship is better appreciated in practical experience than in being theoretical. It is important, therefore, that the knowledge gathered in theory be backed by real life practical experiences in laboratories, workshops and business incubation sites (Okhakhu&Adekunle, 2012).

Conclusions

Economic development through entrepreneurship can very well be sustained with a focus and investment in entrepreneurship education. It has become clear that entrepreneurship can be taught and learned. Business educators and professionals have evolved beyond the myth that ‘entrepreneurs are born, not made.’ Certainly, the future belongs to the nations who are willing to pay the required sacrifice today and for us in Nigeria, there is no better time to do this than now if the economic fortune of generations to come will not be further jeopardized! The identified challenges of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria could be ameliorated with real commitment by all concerned government, educational institutions, students, and other agencies.

Recommendations

Sequel to the above discussion, the following recommendations were made:

- (i) Nigeria is lagging behind in preparing its workforce for the challenges of the fast changing global economy. It is therefore, concluded that enhanced and sustainable global economic development depends on a strong entrepreneurship education. It is against this background therefore, that the following recommendations are proffered for effective entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.
- (ii) Governments should give adequate attention to entrepreneurial development in the country through the provision of good economic environment so that it will encourage individual participation in business while this is guaranteed entrepreneurship will flourish and consequently improve economic development.
- (iii) There should be a call on all relevant authorities to make fresh commitment towards entrepreneurial development by refocusing the education policy towards entrepreneurially eliciting programmes.
- (iv) Government and other stake holders should ensure that educational programmes at all levels of education are made relevant to provide youths and graduates with needed entrepreneurial skills.
- (v) Government as a matter of urgency should establish entrepreneurial centres in each of the six geo-political zones of Nigeria, with adequate attention in providing

necessary inputs.

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