
ENHANCING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME GENERATION IN NIGERIA THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS

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Abstract

Nigeria has witnessed changes in educational policy since colonial period. The crisis of the inability of school leavers to relate their education to the solutions of societal problems still remains. Such socio-economic problems as high rates of unemployment, and widespread poverty constitute contemporary challenges facing the educational system and its products. This paper maintains that entrepreneurship can boost employment and income because: small-scale enterprises are usually labour intensive and easily create new jobs; small enterprises increase overall outputs and incomes; they are means of introducing innovations and new investment opportunities. The paper argues that teaching and learning can be conducted in ways which dispose learners favorably towards identification, creation and successful management of business ventures. For this to be achieved, the teacher should play such special roles as: (i) Emphasize active participation of learners in contributing ideas and arriving at conclusions/decisions; (ii) Encourage the problem-solving technique; (iii) Relate class activities to real-life circumstances.

In the traditional African Society, education was regarded as a means of induction into society and a preparation for adulthood. Fafunwa (1974) observed that the hunter, the warrior, the nobleman or anyone who combined good character with a specific skill was considered to be well-educated. Traditional education was purposeful. Its aim, according to Ukeje (1979), was to ensure the survival of the individual and society.

As time goes on, changes occur in society's perception of desirable goals. The focus of education would consequently change so as to reflect current aspirations of society. During the colonial period in Nigeria, the major pre-occupation of education

Academic Excellence

was to produce clerks, catechists, and assistants of various kinds. Education was the means of acquisition of skill in English language as a pre-condition for employment in offices. Secondary education laid much emphasis on academic subjects. There was no provision for the development of skills in vocational and technical areas.

Colonial education was considered ill-suited to the African Society, Okonkwo (1986) pointed out that colonial education disorganized established traditions and institutions, discouraged the growth of indigenous technology, and presented children with strange concepts dealing with a different universe from the one they knew. Uche (1980) observed the conflict between Nigerian customs and life styles on the one hand and those of Europeans on the other. Fafuwa (1974) used polygamy to illustrate the incompatibility of the traditional African and European ways of life.

Given the shortcomings of colonial education the 6.3.3.4 system of education was introduced as a better means of adapting the child to the Nigerian environment. This two-tier Secondary School System lays emphasis on the inclusion of vocational and technical subjects in the school curriculum in addition to academic subjects. This will ensure that students who may not continue with academics after the Junior Secondary School stage can go on to an apprenticeship system for further vocational training.

Despite changes in educational policy since the colonial period, Nigerian educational system has not yet achieved total success in turning out graduates who can easily relate their education to the solutions of contemporary problems. Some of the major challenges confronting Nigeria in her effort towards socio-economic development include high rate of unemployment among school leavers, high rate of importation of basic goods and services, orientation of school leavers towards white collar jobs in government or multi-national companies' offices. It is therefore expected of the educational system to re-focus its modus operandi so as to quip school leavers appropriately vis-à-vis contemporary challenges. This paper will therefore focus attention on entrepreneurship, how it can be used to boost employment and income generation in Nigeria, and special roles expected of classroom teachers in facilitating the drive for entrepreneurship in learners.

Conceptual Framework

Employment refers to work, especially when it is done to earn money; it is also the state of being employed (Hornby, 2000). Employment rate therefore refers to the percentage of workers who at a given time are in employment (Hanson, 1977). In line with the above notion of employment in quantitative terms, Darity (2008) believes that employment measures the number of employees in a country, region or sector. Employees are generally defined as persons on payrolls; that is, people who are compensated for the work they perform.

The total volume of goods and services produced in a nation is usually influenced by the quantity and quality of that nation's work force or labour force.

Enhancing Employment and Income Generation in...

Labour is not just one of the factors of production, it is inevitably crucial for harnessing the contributions of other non-human factors of production.

According to Harbison (1973), human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organizations, and carry forward national development. The rate of increase in the total output of goods and services in a nation is influenced by the size and productivity of the labour force.

Unemployment of factors of production constitutes serious setback to total output of goods and services, national income and overall socio-economic welfare. The rate of unemployment is the percentage of the labour force without a job. The rate of unemployment in Nigeria is high. Udabah (1999) identified factors responsible for high rate of unemployment in Nigeria as follows:

- i. Supply of labour is greater than demand and there is disequilibrium in the labour market;
- ii. Rural-urban migration leads to high rate of unemployment in the urban centres;
- iii. High rate of population growth in Nigeria contributes to high rate of unemployment;
- iv. Geographical immobility of high-level manpower among states in Nigeria contributes to high rate of unemployment in the country.

Income means the money that a person, a region, a country, etc. earns from work, from investing money, from business, etc. (Hornby, 2000).

According to Hanson (1977), income is derived from two sources, namely:

- (a) The performance of personal services, that is, undertaking some kind of work;
- (b) The ownership of factors of production like land and capital – that is, some kind of property – used to assist production. Incomes are usually in the forms of wages, salaries, interests, profits, rents. These incomes are rewards earned by the different factors of production.

According to Humphrey (1980), the income of a family/household/country acts as an indicator of its well-being and as a guide in its planning.

This situation however may not be obtainable in developing countries where income distribution is highly skewed in favour of a small proportion of the population. World Bank (1999) summarized income distribution statistics for different countries in 1990. For Brazil, India and Morocco the situation is as follows:

Country	Share of top 20% of Households	Share of bottom 20% of Households
Brazil	62.6%	2.4%
India	41.4%	8.1%
Morocco	39.4%	9.8%

Even when large gains are made in national income, the majority of the citizens of most developing countries still wallow in poverty.

Academic Excellence

Although Nigeria is a major oil exporter, poverty has remained a serious problem in the country. The poverty line is defined as the official level of income that is necessary to be able to buy the basic things such as food, clothes and to pay for somewhere to live (UNDP, 1994; Hornby, 2000). The poverty line can be used to assess the general level of economic well-being of the citizens of a country. The Fed. Office of Statistics (1999) reported that more than 60% of Nigerians lived below the poverty line during the period 1980-1996. It reported that the majority of the poor lived in the rural areas and engaged in agriculture.

An entrepreneur can be defined as a person who makes money by starting or running businesses, especially when this involves taking financial risks (Hornby, 2000). In the words of Tolentino (1998), an entrepreneur is an individual who creates new business venture, assumes the personal and business risks associated with new business, and continues to actively manage its operation. Jaja (2000) maintains that entrepreneurs are institutions or human beings who found new organizations, bring innovations to market identity, market opportunities, apply expertise and experience in business operations and provide leadership. From the foregoing, it is discernible that the entrepreneur exhibits such characteristics as:

- i. the desire to start something new;
- ii. the determination to continue until success is achieved;
- iii. the ability to identify needs which can be satisfied at a profit;
- iv. the ability to bring together necessary resources (human and material) so as to satisfy the need identified;
- v. the ability to take risks involved in the business in the hope of making profit.

Entrepreneurship, therefore, may be said to be a functional combination of the above characteristics of the entrepreneur. Hisrich and Peters (1995) define entrepreneurship as the process of creating something different 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.

Olannye and Oyibi (2002) enumerated the essential activities with which entrepreneurship is always associated, namely:

- a. identification of investment opportunities,
- b. decision making as to which opportunity to exploit,
- c. establishing the business enterprise,
- d. getting the resources required for production and distribution,
- e. risk bearing
- f. innovation.

Entrepreneurship education has to do with systematic means of using the educational system to promote entrepreneurship activities for the good of individuals and the society. Singh (2007) defined entrepreneurial education as learning directed towards developing in young people skills, competencies, understanding and attributes

which equip them to be innovative, and to identify, create, initiate, and successfully manage personal, community and work opportunities.

Entrepreneurship, Enhanced Employment and Income

The Centre for Entrepreneurial Development Lagos (CEDL) observed that the pathetic trend of unemployment in Nigeria had led to widespread poverty and criminal activities. The centre believed, according to Sowunmi (2010), that unemployed youths should be trained so as to discover business opportunities around them. Oyekunle (2010), quoting a self-employed graduate of philosophy, argued that the first step towards self-employment is a change of orientation from white collar job to how to be one's own boss, not looking for money at the initial stage but seeking to acquire experience.

Small-scale businesses are a major source of new jobs. They employ a significant proportion of the non-government workers in Nigeria. Ekpenyong (1989) buttressed this point by analyzing employment figures for 1970. The total estimated employment was 1.38 million. Out of this total figure, 622,000 persons (45%) were employed in small-scale non-agricultural enterprises. Udeh (1999) stated that small and medium-scale enterprises are more labour intensive than large companies and are, therefore, an efficient way of creating employment.

In addition to creating employment, small-scale enterprises promote self-reliance for national economies. Indigenous small-scale enterprises, Udeh (1999) pointed out, reduce a nation's reliance on foreign investment and increase self-sufficiency. Small-scale enterprises can also be useful in empowering the poor, especially rural women. Hisrich and Peters (1995) discussed two dimensions of the roles of entrepreneurship in development. According to them, entrepreneurship increases employment, per capita output and income. New business ventures increase national income by creating new jobs. The second dimension involves the role of entrepreneurship in bringing innovations in the structure of business and society. Small-scale enterprises are useful avenues for introducing innovations which enhance overall development.

While recommending entrepreneurship as a panacea for unemployment, Prof. Ogundipe challenged newly inducted veterinary doctors to emulate the ingenuity of the inventor of Dunlop tyre (Adeleye, 2011). According to him, John Boyd Dunlop, a veterinary doctor, contributed to the progress of society through the invention of Dunlop tyre. He challenged fresh graduates to explore opportunities both within and outside their professions. The need to promote the drive for entrepreneurship has important implications for teachers in our educational institutions.

Implications for Classroom Teachers

Entrepreneurship should be pursued as a means of addressing the prevailing problem of high rate of unemployment among school leavers. While unemployed people grapple with the challenge of re-orientation and retraining, the educational system should take bold steps to ensure that future school leavers are equipped with relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for entrepreneurial ventures. Given

Academic Excellence

the present day challenges, education should inculcate in learners requisite skills which enhance prospects for smooth transition from school to self-employment. The teacher is at the centre of the educational system. He/she has important roles to play in preparing learners adequately for life beyond the school. Whatever the school subject, teachers are expected to facilitate the development of critical analysis, problem-solving and decision making skills among learners.

These skills are essential for survival in life.

Problem-solving strategy in teaching lays emphasis on finding out things. This strategy teaches useful ways of solving personal problems. The learner is actively involved in working out the solution to the problem on hand. The teacher should guide learners in selecting the problem to be solved. He should also provide the steps in problem-solving, namely:

- i. define the problem;
- ii. state possible solution (hypothesis);
- iii. gather, evaluate and categorize all available data;
- iv. reach a conclusion based on the data;
- v. publicize your finding.

The steps above enable learners find answers to problems systematically. Problem solving is one way of relating school activities to practical issues which learners will surely meet in life. This strategy encourages learners to explore alternative ways of resolving problems.

Another way of facilitating the drive for entrepreneurship is by relating topics/themes studied in the classroom to their corresponding real-life applications. Classroom lessons on distributive trade, for example, should include practical issues of retail trade, wholesale trade, transport, major producers and consumers of staple food items, etc. A lesson on local dishes derivable from soya beans should incorporate such practical matters as cultural relevance, financial implications, nutritional benefits, etc. In this way, class work will become meaningful to the learners. They would also achieve better understanding and retention of lessons. Transfer of learning to similar or related circumstances would therefore be less problematic.

Field trips are very useful in this regard. They provide opportunities for learners to relate classroom work to real-life situations. The onus is on the teacher to do prior planning with learners, school authority, parents, and officials of each place of interest. Where school authorities or parents cannot sponsor field trips as often as necessary teachers can fall back on the use of resource persons. Nzeribe (2002) maintains that an individual can be engaged as a resource person if he is an expert in a field of study or occupation. Such a person should be somebody who can readily pass on useful information to Learners. This strategy offers the opportunity for direct interaction with somebody who is successful in his chosen profession.

Enhancing Employment and Income Generation in...

Learners should be encouraged to make contributions of ideas so as to arrive at decisions or conclusions on topics being considered. This strategy in teaching is called discussion. It involves the active participation of learners.

Discussion can be structured, whereby the teacher gives definitions, corrects divergent views, and draws conclusions. In an unstructured discussion, the teacher only facilitates learners' activities. This strategy allows learners to be involved in interactions with other people so as to generate ideas, clarify points, evaluate issues and work out acceptable conclusions.

Conclusion

The educational system is essentially the means by which society inculcates into its younger members desirable knowledge, skills and attitudes. When new challenges arise, education should be re-focused in its general goal and means of delivery so as to continue to be functional. The current situation whereby school leavers are generally oriented towards white collar jobs has led to ever increasing rates of unemployment. Even when it is obvious that jobs are not available for all seekers, school leavers appear to be ill-equipped to embark on self-employment ventures. The way forward is to incorporate entrepreneurial disposition among learners.

Recommendations

The educational system can be used to develop in learners skills and understanding which equip them to identify, initiate and manage business ventures. Classroom teachers, school authorities, parents and guardians have special roles to play so as to stimulate curiosity, enquiry and creativity in learners. Such skills are essential for the growth of entrepreneurship. The following suggestions are therefore proffered:

- (1) Classroom teaching should always aim at helping learners achieve clear understanding of lesson topics. The teacher should be someone who is professionally equipped for the job of teaching. He should be able to prepare what to teach, materials for illustration, and strategies for lesson delivery. The classroom environment should be free of all kinds of physical and emotional threat.
- (2) Classroom work should always relate to real issues. Classroom activities would become interesting to learners when such activities have clear relationship with life in society. Field trips should be used as often as possible. In this way, learners would easily relate theoretical learning to practical applications. Resource persons should be engaged. Such persons are usually accomplished professionals who can serve as role models.
- (3) The educational system should expose learners to opportunities for problem solving. Learners should always be given assignments, projects, and research works to accomplish. Such exercises help learners acquire useful skills for addressing practical challenges in life. In this way, learners would learn how to work out solutions to problems.
- (4) School authorities should always provide necessary financial and administrative support for effective teaching and learning. The general tone of

school leadership should be such that enhances teaching and learning. School authorities should liaise with parents and relevant organizations to ensure that field trips, seminars and such other exercises are organized effectively.

- (5) Parents should encourage their wards to explore areas of interest outside their fields of study. This is because entrepreneurial ideas can spring up either from one's field of specialization or from an area of special interest. Once genuine needs can be identified, means of meeting them would usually constitute business opportunities.

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Enhancing Employment and Income Generation in...

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