
TRANSFORMATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: THE PRACTICAL REALITY

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Abstract

This paper examined the practical reality of transforming entrepreneurship education in Nigeria which will be geared towards enhancing sustainable economic development in the country. The objective of the paper is to examine all processes and procedures that will help in re-designing and transforming entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, even to advice the necessary authorities. A theoretical and analytical approach was adopted in this study. From the findings of the paper it is highly clear that there will be no more unemployment in our society because every youth and unemployed graduate will be self reliant and ready to contribute meaningfully to the economic development of Nigeria. The study recommended that the scope of entrepreneurship education (formal and informal) curriculum should be broadened to include skills like theater art, music, shoe making, aluminum profiles window/door works, plumbing works and all kinds of house electrical works. This paper also believes that if entrepreneurship education is properly and practical transformed in reality as stated above, graduates and youth unemployment will be reduced not in Nigeria, since the skill acquired will make them self reliant and ensure economic development and growth in Nigeria.

Key words: Transformation, Entrepreneurship education, practical reality, Entrepreneurship curriculum, Self reliance and Economic development

Entrepreneurship education concept is a lifelong learning process which is essential to human existence; it brings competitiveness to the knowledge economy of any nation. It applies to all levels of education and training both formal and informal as the case may be. Every form of entrepreneurship education should be such that will be capable of transforming one into owning a business enterprise.

Institutions of higher learning need to wake up to face the challenges. Olaleye (2009) noted that the various federal government programmes on eradication of poverty might have failed because graduates of the education system lack the practical skills which can be acquired through Entrepreneurship Education Programme. Studies carried out by Scott and Twomay (1988) and Gibb (2008) shows that in developed country like United Kingdom many Universities were already offering an impressive and sophisticated array of entrepreneurship activities to the extent that 25 percent of English students has a lot of business ideas. In this same vein 41 Journal of Education and Leadership Development of December 2010 captured it that 32 percent aspired to be self-employed. Other studies conducted by Harrison & Hart (1989), Sandholtz (1990) have also revealed the zeal to own business by students. Another separate study carried out by Olaleye (2009) shows that in three South-Western universities in Nigeria, 92.2% of the students were aware of the entrepreneurship education programme in their universities and were ready to set up their own businesses, but lacks the fund to establish their businesses. While 85% of the respondents complained about the inability of federal government to adequately fund tertiary institutions to accommodate entrepreneurship education as a programme, there was also the complaint of lack of qualified instructors and poor preparations of youths in terms of practical training. All these identified inhibitions need to be addressed. With entrepreneurship education, the nation's graduates will become self reliant and employers of labor and not job seekers. Their skills will enhance business expansion and reduce the level of poverty.

One objective of Entrepreneurship Education Which makes it distinctive is its focus on realization of opportunity; Entrepreneurship education can be oriented towards different ways of realizing opportunities: most popular one is regular entrepreneurship otherwise known as opening a new organization or starting a new business. Another approach is to promote innovation or introduce new products or services or markets in existing firms. This approach is called corporate entrepreneurship which was made popular by author Gifford Pinchot in his book. New study indicates that clustering is now a driving factor; this occurs when a group of employees breaks off from the parent company to form a new company but continues to do business with the parent company.

Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education are highly distinct because it focuses on realization of opportunity among others, where as management education focuses on the best way to operate existing hierarchies and run administration. An entrepreneur is the owner or the

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manager of business enterprise who through risks and initiative attempts to make a profit, though many times, end up in making loss (Ojeifo, 2010).

Entrepreneurship education mainly refers to wide-ranging work done within the educational administration with a view to enhancing entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship education is also provided and supported by many labour market parties and organizations. Practical measures are geared to inculcate positive attitudes and develop knowledge and skills relating to entrepreneurship, create new business, upgrade entrepreneurs' and their personals' competencies and bring about an entrepreneurial mode of operation at the workplace and in all other activities. Entrepreneurship education is rooted in lifelong learning and a networked mode of operation as earlier mentioned.

Conceptually and According to Wikipedia, "Entrepreneurship is the act of being an entrepreneur" or "one who undertakes training and innovations, seeks financing and runs businesses with his acumen and effort to transform innovations and ideas into economic goods".

Entrepreneurship has been simply captured as the use of human courage to seek investment opportunities and establish a profit-oriented enterprise (Ikeme & Onu, 2007). Entrepreneurship involves creation process, conscious devotion of time and effort, involves risk and has some rewards.

Willken (2005), stated that entrepreneurship is all about skill acquisition and changes, which he categorized into five key types namely:

- Initial expansion
- Subsequent expansion
- Factor innovation
- Production innovations
- Market innovations.

An economic change which is the resultant effect of all the above is the most desirable in Nigeria now that poverty level is very high.

Entrepreneurship according to Walter (1989) can be defined in terms of the following three essentials attributes:

- Ability to perceive profitable business opportunities
- Willingness to act on what is perceived and
- The necessary organizing skills associated with the project.

Therefore, entrepreneurship refers to the act or process of identifying business opportunities and organizing initiative to a successful business activity. Stoner, Freeman and Gilbreth (1995), stipulates that entrepreneurship involves initiating changes in

production, whereas management involves the ongoing coordination of the production process.

Entrepreneurship is the individual's ability to translate ideas into action. This encompasses creativity, innovativeness and risk-taking, as well as ability to plan and direct action towards the achievement of goals. These qualities support everyday life in education, at work, in leisure activities and in other societal activities. These qualities are needed in entrepreneurship, but they also enhance workers' awareness of their work and help them seize opportunities.

Intrapreneurship means employee initiatives in organizations to undertake something new, without anybody asking him to do so. Hence, the intrapreneur focuses on innovation and creativity that transforms an idea into a profitable venture, while operating within the organizational environment. Thus, intrapreneurs are inside entrepreneurs who follow the goal of the organization. Intrapreneurship is an example of motivation through job design, either formally or informally. Intrapreneurship within the firm seriously strives to produce social capital in addition to economic capital. Employees, such as marketing executives or perhaps those engaged in a special project within a larger firm, are encouraged to behave as entrepreneurs, even though they have the resources, capabilities and security of the larger firm to draw upon.

Drucker (1985), stated that an entrepreneur is the only one who always searches for change, responds to it and exploits it as an opportunity. Glueck (1980) defined an entrepreneur as "an individual who creates a new firm and continues to manage it until it is successful. In short, an entrepreneur is a person who identifies business opportunities and organizes the required resources to initiate successful business activity. An entrepreneur is different from a manager who only plans, organizes and controls a business idea after it has been successfully initiated by the entrepreneur.

Gana (2001) 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 the identified opportunities. According to Hisrich and Peters (2002), it is the dynamic process of creating incremental wealth.

Objectives of the Study

Highlighting the need for practical reality in transforming entrepreneurship education is one of the main objective of the paper, others are;

- To examine all processes and procedures that will help in re-designing and transforming entrepreneurship education curriculum both in the formal and informal sector, and advice the necessary authorities accordingly.
- To emphasis the benefits of entrepreneurship education.
- To advocate for private participation in funding entrepreneurship education

Origin, History and Transformational Development of Entrepreneurship Education

The history of entrepreneurship education though mainly informal in nature cannot easily be traced, but observations and how trades and skills were being passed from parents to children gives an insight that the origin of entrepreneurship education is as old as the early man; who first existed here on earth.

Traditional or informal entrepreneurship education started with apprenticeship and skill acquisition. According to Ile, N.M. (2001) and Nnamdi Ebo (2012), Hausa, Igbo, Benin and Yoruba, all had their own informal entrepreneurship education between 13th-19th century. People in these areas were exposed to entrepreneurship opportunities even outside their native areas. Hausas entrepreneurship education and skill acquisition were in the following areas; tanning, dyeing, weaving and metalwork which were highly developed. However, acquiring the skills mentioned above is always an integral part of the Islamic religion.

Igbo's have acquired skills and entrepreneurship in metalwork, weaving, and woodcarving, shoe making, trading and nearly in all the artistic works. They highly specialized in buying and selling of goods and services, where their prominences are well observed. Also, their entrepreneurial expertise has lead the Igbo's in owning and managing small and medium scale enterprise (SMEs) very well.

The Yorubas predominantly acquire skills in domestic agriculture, craftwork. Since the 13th century, Yoruba artists have been producing masterpieces of woodcarving and bronze casting, all as business ventures and enterprises (Nnamdi Ebo, 2012).

In 1486, Benin people through the Oba had a lot of trade contact with Portuguese, Europeans and Dutch in the areas of slaves, palm oil, ivory, pepper and textile. According Nnamdi Ebo (2012), one major area of Benin entrepreneurship skill acquisition was bronze casting and image molding. All the above skill acquisitions were through informal entrepreneurship education, which many times were passed from parents to children. In that order, informal entrepreneurship education was easily adopted in Nigeria simply because forefathers, who were the early entrepreneurs, were able to pass on the concepts, principles and the foundation for entrepreneurship. The difference now, is that it has become a course, a field of study in schools, even as Nigeria government has taken keen interest in developing the idea using various methods such as small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) programs etc. With Nigerian being more educated and the fact that government could no longer employ most school leavers and graduates, they had to initiate an economic programme to encourage individuals to go into private businesses and be self reliant. Such economic policy which are geared towards self reliant for individuals are;

1. Open apprenticeship scheme

2. Youth and Women empowerment program
3. Establishment of Peoples Bank of Nigeria
4. Funds for small scale industries (FUSSI)
5. Co-operative societies.
6. Establishment of Vocational schools

These were all put in place to ensure entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial development in Nigeria. But modern entrepreneurship education which is mostly formal can today be seen nearly all schools in Nigeria, particularly the higher institutions based on the fact that government through the Federal Ministry of Education has made entrepreneurship education one of the compulsory courses for students in universities across the country. This was aimed at inculcating in youths the spirit of self reliance. The development will not only address the problem of unemployment and underemployment but will also ensure an economic development and growth in Nigeria.

Wikipedia (2010) stipulates that various kind of entrepreneurship education are offered at all levels of schooling in Nigeria, from primary to secondary schools; where students in formal schools are always asked to produce sweeping brooms and mat, are highly monitored/guided when they are doing that.

Hindrances or Obstacles to Entrepreneurship Education Development

The following are the most prevailing obstacles facing rapid entrepreneurial development.

1. Non constantly reviewing of entrepreneurship education curriculum in Nigeria
2. Frequent educational policy somersault, rampant political and bureaucratic corruption together with the absence of social consensus on importance of entrepreneurship education.
3. Poor access to vocational and skills acquisition centers for informal entrepreneurship education and training
4. Lack of proper regulatory framework
5. Administrative and trade barriers that reduces capacity building and inhibit access to technical support.
6. No significant infrastructures (especially with regards to roads and electricity) and systematic irregularities inimical to small businesses.
7. Absent of friendly environment that will encourage entrepreneurship development at grassroots level.
8. Lack of initial fund or capital to take off any entrepreneurship ventures

In today's knowledge economy Human talent is the single most important production factor which ensures effective entrepreneurship education (Ekpudu, J.E., 2012). Focusing on the development of a skilled workforce and the expansion of human capacities through high quality systems of entrepreneurship education, training, skills

acquisition and lifelong learning is very important for helping youths and graduates find good jobs and companies to find the skilled workers they need. This will put the entrepreneur at a very competitive advantage.

Strategies to Alleviate the Hindrances and Problems of Entrepreneurship Education

In order to achieve viable entrepreneurship education that will enhance sustainable development in Nigeria, the following strategies according to Ayodele (2006), will help to alleviate the problem of entrepreneurship education in the country.

1. Genuine school and work based learning system should be incorporated in entrepreneur studies, which should form part of the national economic development strategies. The development of apprenticeship scheme will give new graduates some work skills and experience.
2. There should be Pool fund established from public and private sector in order to create a small venture capital fund for entrepreneurs
3. School based enterprises should be introduced, where students should be made to identify potential businesses and operate them using the schools as mini-incubator.
4. Small business schools should be provided, where interested students and community members can be enrolled and allowed to participate.
5. Develop entrepreneurship internship programme, which should be meant to match students with locally successful entrepreneurs with clearly established education programme.
6. Colleges of entrepreneurship should be established to inculcate the basic and specific entrepreneur skills on students; it can also serve as skill acquisition centers.
7. Economic friendly political environment should also be created
8. Government should also reduce the tax rate being use to tax small scale business.

The basic entrepreneurship education core curriculum needs constant review in other to achieve its objectives. Students should be given scores for taking responsibilities in the school community and in their immediate community; they should be encouraged for taking initiatives in solving problems and forming their own opinions on common issues. As well students must become familiar with the works of an entrepreneur; and they should gain basic knowledge of the operation and the respective functions of the school, community, the public sector, business, industry and organizations as a professional entrepreneur.

Entrepreneurs are expected to utilize the potentials inherent not only in school-home cooperation but also in the skill acquisition centers. Periods of work experience must be planned to be goal-oriented, so that the pupil will have a defined task to do, as well be equipped to observe working life in practice .

The role of higher education in promoting entrepreneurship relates to inculcating entrepreneurial attitudes, generating embryonic innovations, nourishing

entrepreneurship instigated by knowledge gained and innovations developed during studies, and promoting growth-oriented business. This is why lecturers in higher institutions must be competent in entrepreneurship education: to teach and promote entrepreneurship. Even postgraduate students must have entrepreneurial knowledge and skills which will open up new career prospects for them. In addition, it will strengthen the role of higher institutions in supporting growth-oriented business and the internationalization of businesses through transferring of academic knowledge and innovations. Work practice and theses can be planned to encourage a career in business.

In higher institutions, entrepreneurship education should be increasingly offered as an elective course available to all students, and studies will be linked more closely to research and development. At work environment, in-service training will cater for graduate employees' training needs. Higher institutions overall priorities should be;

- To promote graduate entrepreneurship.
- To focus on motivating entrepreneurship, elaborating innovations into businesses and supporting the growth of such businesses.
- To develop business know-how.
- To promote the utilization of research findings.
- To develop cooperation between science, technology and business incubator.
- To constantly develop a link and cooperation between higher education institutions and government policies.
- To diversify the provision of continuing professional education intended for entrepreneurs and other employed persons.
- To develop teachers and lecturers' pedagogical competencies relating to entrepreneurship (i.e. through teachers training institutes, vocational teachers colleges and Conferences/seminars for lecturers).
- To enhance Research and Development, specifically to support and upgrade Small and Medium Enterprises (SME).
- To support transfer of business to the next generation.
- To establish Universities master's programme in SME business.
- To enhance entrepreneurial training given to postgraduate students.
- To promote the mobility of entrepreneurial researchers and sharing of knowledge between universities, research institutes and businesses.

Conclusion

The study has clearly highlighted all the processes and procedures, which will help to re-design entrepreneurship education curriculum. The paper also indicated more benefits that will be derived from entrepreneurship education.

Recommendation

The following recommendations were advanced to assist the stakeholders in taking a rightful decision, in order to transform entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.

1. There should be private participation in funding entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions; this will give rise to adequate provision of facilities and equipment for students studying entrepreneurship education.
2. Internship programme for all graduates to acquire skills and training for self reliance should be part of the policies and legislation, which needs to be for one year duration for all students in tertiary institutions
3. Graduates of entrepreneurship education should be adequately equipped with machines, facilities and equipment, which will enable them to continue the skills acquired to the extent of being self-reliant. Curricula reform which is geared towards equipping the beneficiaries of higher institutions with skills to be self-reliant is necessary for sustainable development of the country.
4. This development should not be politicized, rather, the entire policy frameworks needed for its sustainability and improvement should be provided so as to salvage Nigeria from clutches of poverty.
5. Lecturers who teach entrepreneurship education should be giving more training through local and international conferences/ seminars.
6. The federal government in collaboration with state governments should provide scholarships/bursaries to performing students of entrepreneurship education.
7. Universities should start to commercialize their research findings instead of leaving them in the shelves.
8. The National Universities Commission (NUC) and National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) should as a matter of urgency review the minimum benchmark of courses being offered in Nigerian universities, polytechnics and colleges of Education; this will enable entrepreneurship education to be studied as a professional course like accounting, law.
9. More vocational and skill acquisition centers should be established across the country.

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