
RE-ENGINEERING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: A SINE-QUA-NON FOR YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper examined re-engineering entrepreneurship education as a sine-qua-non for youth unemployment and economic independence in Nigeria. The paper highlighted the concepts of entrepreneur, entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship. It also x-rayed the concepts of youth unemployment, and economic independence. The paper further explained the methods of impacting entrepreneurship education and the importance of re-engineering entrepreneurship education as a sine-qua-non for youth unemployment and economic independence. As a way forward, the paper recommended among others that entrepreneurship academy should be established in all states of the federation as a matter of urgency. Entrepreneurship education should also be made a compulsory element at all levels of learning-primary, secondary, tertiary with all institutions teaching courses in entrepreneurship, the coverage and complexity of which will vary with each level.

The growing importance of the role of entrepreneur in a country's economic growth and development has stirred up both developed and developing countries to formulate policies that would promote its development in their economies. It is pertinent to note that countries like Japan, Taiwan and Korea became highly industrialized, mainly due to their strong and deep entrepreneurial culture (Nwachukwu 2005). This underscores the fact that in this era of globalization, a vibrant industrial sector that is governed by competent entrepreneurs will help keep the nation's economy largely exports competitive.

One of the needs of society is to create and provide job opportunities for its youths through entrepreneurship and vocational training. The Nigerian educational system must equip students with basic intellectual capabilities designed to prepare them

for the job market. This is a global syndrome. It is in the light of the skills gap that entrepreneurship development programmes in Nigeria universities, polytechnics, monotechnics etc are being designed to provide the necessary filler for the higher institutions job market skills gap.

Again, Nigeria turns out large numbers of graduates with dwindling employment opportunities thereby compounding the problems of unemployment and poverty.

Obviously, the rate of unemployment will continue to rise unless adequate measures are creatively deployed to tackle the problem. Infact, this is the basis of the paper.

Zimmerers and Scarborough (2006), sees entrepreneurship, as the creation and running of one's own business. To Morrison (1998), it is the creation, building and distribution of something of value from practically nothing to individuals, groups, organizations and society. He summed up by stating that it involves planning and organizing small business ventures through the mobilization of people and resources to meet people's needs.

The above definitions point to the fact that entrepreneurship involves innovation, development, recognition, seizing opportunities and converting opportunities to the marketable ideas, value while bearing the risk of competition.

Associated with entrepreneurship is the₃ concept of intrapreneurship. This involves entrepreneurship ingenuity and spirit within an organization rather than outside. It provides opportunities to find key employees of an organization to unfold their potentials, performance and hard work to earn a reward or share in the profit of revenue generated by his/her ingenuity for the enterprise. The concept of entrepreneurship is beginning to spread rapidly in modern times.

Concept of Education

Education in the general sense is any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual. In its technical sense, education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills, and values from one generation for another. Education can also be defined as the process of becoming an educated person (Okolie, 2011).

An educated person refers to a person that has access to optimal states of mind regardless of the situation they are in. that person is able to perceive accurately, think clearly and act effectively to achieve self-selected goals and aspirations (Don, 2011).

Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is a course now included in the curriculum of most tertiary institutions such as monotechnics, polytechnics, colleges of education, universities etc. is aimed at equipping the students with various skills, attitudes and knowledge required to become a successful entrepreneur. Skill refers to individuals ability to perform a specific task or assignment successfully. To attain these skills the

individuals or persons need to acquire basic training through one or combination of formal education and informal education.

What Is Formal and Informal Education?

- i. **Formal Education:** Refers to the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, intelligence through academic grooming as offered by college of education, polytechnics, monotechnics, universities or similar tertiary institutions.
- ii. **Informal Education** Refers to the process of acquiring knowledge, skills or techniques of carrying out specific task or trade through apprenticeship in the area of interest, such as apprenticeship in mechanic workshop, skill acquisition centre etc.

The rationale for the establishment of entrepreneurship is two-fold:

- To ensure inculcation in students the spirit of entrepreneurial education.
- To commercialized the centres with a view to increasing the internally generated revenue of the various higher institutions through patronage from students as well as members of the public.

Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria Tertiary Institutions

Some of the objectives of entrepreneurship education according to Okolie (2011) are:

- The developments of skills of trainees to successfully start, manage, diversify and expand business enterprises.
- Facilitation of easy access to start-up capital for trainees, especially funds from banks and allied financial institutions for students and society at large.
- Generation of employment opportunities for youths in line with the goal of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy.
- Compliance with the National Universities Commission and National Board for Technical Education guidelines which stipulated that entrepreneurship education centres be established in Nigerian universities and polytechnics etc.

The Concept of Youth Unemployment

Youth employment is a crucial issue in Nigeria because the youth constitute a major part of the labour force and they have innovative ideas, which among other factors are important in the development process of the country. A large proportion of them, however, are unemployed. The negative consequences include: psychological problems of frustration, depression, hostility and a gradual drift of some visible unemployed youth into all manner of criminal behaviour.

Dantwala (1971) defines unemployment as a state in which people who can work are without jobs and are seeking work for pay or profit. The National Rolling Plan (1990-1992) suggested that the rate of visible unemployment among persons between fifteen and twenty-four years of age is more than twice the rate among the labour force as a whole. Yet, the high proportion of young persons among the unemployed also reflects the implications of the rapid expansion in education.

Callaway (1973) points out that most of job-seeking youths have attended school for varying lengths of times thus; the problem of unemployment among school-leavers and the educated are subsets of the youth unemployment problems.

For the purpose of this study, we adopted the definition of the Directorate of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) for the youthful population i.e. persons below the age of 30 years. The lower limit is put at 15 years, satisfying the statutory minimum working age in Nigeria. Thus, the study population falls within the age group of 15-30 years. Defined in this form, this study sees youth unemployment as relating to:

- School-leavers unemployment (Unemployment among those with not more than primary educations)
- Educated unemployment (Unemployment among those with secondary education)
- Graduate unemployment (Unemployment among those who have passed out of the tertiary institutions)

Unemployment exists when members of the labour force wish to work but cannot get jobs. It is thus used in the sense of involuntary decisions on the part of a person to choose leisure rather than work.

Economists have identified four basic traditional categories of unemployment. These are: seasonal, frictional, cyclical and structural unemployment.

Seasonal unemployment recurs, and it is usually of short duration. It stems from the annual weather cycle and from customs and traditions.

Frictional unemployment results from the imperfections in the daily operations of the labour market.

Cyclical unemployment, as its name implies, occurs during downward swings in the business cycle, and results from a general deficiency of demand.

Structural unemployment is explained as a massive economic change that transforms the structure of the economy that is those changes that alter the production functions or the distribution of labour supply.

Economic Independence

This refers to economic autonomy. In the 60s, Nigeria's economy was stronger than that obtained in the countries now known as the Asian Tigers. Nigeria was until the early 70s one of the 40 strongest economies in the world as Agricultural products accounted for more than 60 percent of Nigeria's income at that time.

The convertibility of the Naira was acceptable in certain countries of the world. By the early 80s, things started sliding down as a result of shifting of emphasis from Agro-allied business to oil and gas business which rather than become a blessing turned out to be a curse and an albatross.

To compound the problems, the educational system started to show signs of collapse as a result of decay of infrastructures and poor funding. Education expenditure as percentage of Gross National product stood at 0.7% and the annual budgetary allocation to education has an average of 5% in the last six years.

In the face of these problems, Nigeria became weaker with unemployment, hunger, poverty, insecurity, corruption and undemocratic tendencies staring us in the face. Rather than invest in human capital, the leaders resorted to siphoning of the nations resources to the developed countries. Nigeria became battered from all fronts and there is hardly any nation in the world that can survive the onslaughts.

As a result of the appalling situation in which she has found herself, the only way out is to revisit or re-engineer the purpose of entrepreneurship education which the "ASIAN TIGERS," Indian, China Indonesia and Brazil have long identified as the only route to economic independence. The role of the entrepreneur in the business world is critical in our economic development, improvement in the standard of living and quality of life to which each of us may aspire.

Methods of Impacting Entrepreneurship Education

The instructional techniques for impacting entrepreneurship education should be learner-centered with the facilitator or teacher or instructor guiding and advising the learners. It requires the use of deductive method of learning on the part of the learner. The method provides for mental reasoning (cognitive) about general happenings from economic, social and environmental situations to arrive at the particular or individual problem at hand. The method recognizes the potentials around him/her. The entrepreneur is an individual who learns from the environment, professional and business groups. The facilitator of entrepreneurship studies should guide the learners using the following approaches.

- **Experiential Learning Method**
This method engages the learner in direct experience with learning resources to increase knowledge, develop skills and clarify values .
- **Exposure to Knowledge of Social, Economic, Political and Environmental System.**
The facilitator needs to discuss extensively the social, economic, political and environment where the learner lives and will want to work.
- **Organizing Group Learning**
Learners can be put into small size groups to carry out practical on projects and learn form each other.
- **The Use of Games And Simulation Techniques**
Games and puzzles such as monopoly, chess, whots, draught, chart etc can help develop the reasoning faculty of the entrepreneur, sharpen his hunches for alertness, initiative, opportunities etc which are necessary ingredients for effective business decision making.
- **Projects and Assignments**
The entrepreneurship ought to be practical in his dealings and should therefore be exposed to practical learning through projects and assignments.
- **Exposure to Practical and Experiment**
The method of educating children is not exactly the same as that of the adults.

➤ **Field Trips and Visitations**

Field trips and visitation to existing businesses and research centers will help to broaden the practical horizon of the trainee entrepreneur. Moreover such trips afford the learner the opportunity of exploring the socio-economic environment.

➤ **Apprenticeship System**

Under this system potential entrepreneurs are trained in vocational skills acquisition and craft centers. In Nigeria, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Open Apprenticeship System (NOAS) and Skill Acquisition Centres are located in states and local government headquarters to teach skills in art, crafts, tailoring, weaving, embroidering, agric product processing like fruit juice etc. they are often organized by wives of Governors, Local

Government Chairmen and NGOs to empower most especially women.

NOAS trains and retain people in diverse areas of economic endeavours. Skills learnt range from livestock keeping, engineering, constructions, carpentry, furniture, auto crafts, internal decorative, art/craft, computer/information technology etc.

The various entrepreneurship education methods enumerated above provides the basis for continuous entrepreneurship development for job creation, modernization and socio-economic development of a nation. This is why the Government of most countries of the world attaches great importance to entrepreneurship development.

Problems of Entrepreneurship Education

Lortyer and Udoe (2008) identified the following factors as constraints militating against entrepreneurship education.

➤ **Self Interest of Programme Organizers:** Youth empowerment skills acquisition programmes initiated by the Federal Government were manned by individuals who were self interested rather than public oriented.

➤ **Inadequate Funding:** The funding by the Federal Government are grossly inadequate. Furthermore, the priorities of these programmes are not tailored to the professional areas of the graduate. For instance, asking an electrical engineer graduate or business education graduate to go into carpentry instead of practicing the vocation learnt in school is not only dehumanizing, but will immediately lead to the next challenge which is disinterest.

➤ **Uninterested Youths:** The first step of becoming a successful entrepreneur is having the interest of being an entrepreneur. Most of these youth graduates prefer to seek for white-collar jobs rather than initiating small business.

➤ **The Fear of Failure:** This is a psychological problem that defect most people. The fear of starting a business and failing. The fear to be reckon with failure instead of success.

➤ **Unpragmatic Approach of Business Educators:** The role of business educators is both knowledge and initiate change in the attitude of students and their colleagues in the same profession. Change is paramount because all over

the world, methods of doing business have changed dramatically for the past two decades. This had led to radical changes and development in the requirement, responsibilities and status of the entrepreneurs as such business educators should take practical approach to adequately train tomorrow entrepreneurs to have an understanding of the country and to be able to organize commercial enterprises, to have skill in the management of people and in the art of delegation and to prepare them for the challenges ahead.

Why Re-Engineering Entrepreneurship Education as a Singuanon for Youth Unemployment and Economic Independence in Nigeria?

Engineering is the activity of applying scientific knowledge to the design, building and control of machines, roads, bridges, projects. electrical equipment etc. On the other hand Re means concerning or on the subject of or again. The word re-engineering therefore is the activity of applying scientific knowledge to revisit the subject of entrepreneurship education so as to contribute meaningfully to Nigeria economic growth and development.

On the other hand, Singuanon means something that is essential or imperative before you can achieve something else.

Individuals who venture out on their own into the market place as entrepreneurs do so for a combination of reasons: Desire to control their own destinies/business, freedom from supervision by a boss, strive to achieve profit, employment creation, innovation creativity, fulfillment of psychological needs, fulfillment of social needs and the self-actualization needs.

➤ **Desire to Control Their Own Destinies/Business**

This brings about the greatest benefit and it's often the greatest motivator. As small business owners individual control how they wish to run their personal lives. Entrepreneurs plan their own business activities. They schedule their professional responsibilities and duties around their personal priorities.

➤ **Freedom from Supervision by a Boss**

Entrepreneurship still must answer to those on whom they depend, such as bankers, suppliers, or possibly transceivers; however these relationship are on equal basis and not a subordinate one.

➤ **Strive to Achieve Profit**

This is the hardest objectives to achieve and usually takes a longer time to accomplish. If the determination to success is present, it can be a realizable goal.

➤ **Employment Creation**

Since an entrepreneur is self reliant, there is the need to establish links through her various outlets, offices and divisions. Thus, land, labour and capital must be checked by an individual who is specialist in the field to ensure maximum production and utilization of resources.

➤ **Innovation and Creativity**

The primary benefit of an entrepreneur is to become, innovative and creative in nature, by doing this, the most benefit of his initiative would be achieved in the work place.

Conclusion

In this paper, efforts had been made to explain the concepts of entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship, examine the problems, methods of impacting entrepreneurship education etc. It also treated the concepts of youth unemployment and economic independence. It is therefore, pertinent to note that one of the needs of society is to create and provide job opportunities for its youths, and this can only be achieved through entrepreneurship education.

Recommendations

As a way forward, the following recommendations were proffer:

- ❖ Entrepreneurship education should be made a compulsory element at all levels of learning-primary, secondary, tertiary with all institutions teaching course in entrepreneurship , the coverage and complexity of which will vary with each level
- ❖ The mindset of our youth should be re-oriented to see entrepreneurship and self employment as an option to job seeking before even graduating from an institution.
- ❖ Government at all levels must have deliberate policies to create a conducive environment for entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship to flourish. Policy summersault is killing ideas and businesses.
- ❖ Entrepreneurship academy in all states of the federation.

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