

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND LIFELONG EDUCATION: A PANACEA FOR ECONOMIC EMANCIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS AND DEVELOPING NATIONS

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The word, entrepreneurship, invokes names as Bill Gates and Paul Allen of Microsoft; Colonel Harland Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), Mark Zuckerberg of facebook; and Aliko Dangote of Dangote Group, among others. Their popularity is not just because they are among the world's richest men but because they are self-employed and involved in lifelong economic development of individuals and nations.

The challenging paths trod successful by entrepreneurs make them unique super-humans. For instance, Mark Zuckerberg was said to have launched facebook from his hostel on 4th February 2014, assisted by his three roommates at Harvard University. Colonel Harland Sanders started the famous KFC from his road side restaurant in Kentucky. Aliko Dangote started by selling sweet to his classmates in elementary school despite coming from an affluent home.

The analysis of the humble beginning of today's celebrated wealthy entrepreneurs may be endless. What is important about them is that they are not only self-employed for a lifetime but instrumental to the employment of very many others and development of their countries. With economic recession staring countries of the world in the face, use should be resorting to grooming the likes of Bill Gates, Colonel Sanders, Mark Zuckerberg and Aliko Dangote, to turn our hailing economies around.

Having said this, I must congratulate the conveners of this conference, Association for Encouraging Qualitative Education in Nigeria, especially for the choice of the theme. The conference is comely as it will lend credence to developing ways of making the youths brace entrepreneurship rather than hopelessly searching for white-collar jobs. I equally congratulate the participants of this conference because besides presenting paper it is wished many that successful entrepreneurs would be born.

Concepts of Lifelong and Entrepreneurial Education

It is needless to define education as a concept. This is not in anyway commonising education. It reiterates the fact that education is a household word.

Delving into its definition in an occasion like this, restricts its meaning to only formal situations. No professional discussion in any field is complete without recourse to the term, education. It is pigeon holed when it is referred to learning/teacher situation but broader commensurately when it is called apprenticeship or orientation. However, all orientation facilitators cannot be taken for educationists.

Lifelong Education, or learning, according to (Wikipedia 2017) is an “ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons”. aim of it is not just to enhance social inclusion but for one to be a proactive citizen, improve personal development and become self-sustained in life. It should be emphasized that lifelong learning does not restrict its recipients to a place and time of learning (school) nor a place and time to apply knowledge (the workplace). Rather, it is knowledge received from and available source which is useful at any time and place.

Entrepreneurship is a concept derived from the activities of an entrepreneur. The word entrepreneur is an English term derived from the French word, entrepreneur, which means always seen from the economic perspective, hence Okpukpara (2011) posited that an entrepreneur is a person who undertakes the organization of venture and its mechanism to maximize profits in the presence of risks. Entrepreneurship education, (Business Dictionary, 2017) is the capacity and willingness to develop, organize and manage a business venture and its risks in order to make profit. Therefore, entrepreneurship education is the gamut of induction, orientation and different forms of teaching given to youth (people in general) to inculcate in them the potentials of beneficial adventure, which would enable them to produce needed goods and services, inspite of inherent risks.

Entrepreneurial and Lifelong Education is the form of education given to people to make them employers and not employees. Not only that, it is a continuous education because it can be acquired at any point of an individual’s life. In addition, when acquired, the recipients are productive throughout their lifetime; they do not have retirement age as long as their acquired skills and ventures are still marketable.

Characteristics of an Entrepreneur

In order to qualify as a successful entrepreneur, one must have the following traits and characteristics:

- ❖ Passion and motivation
- ❖ Risk taking
- ❖ Self belief, hardwork and disciplined
- ❖ Adaptability
- ❖ Money management
- ❖ Network abilities
- ❖ Being prepared to take exist where necessary (Seth, 2017)

Importance of Entrepreneurial/Lifelong Education

A look at the importance of Entrepreneurial and Lifelong Education is synonymous to looking at the importance of entrepreneurs themselves. This is so because Entrepreneurship Education is intended to produce entrepreneurs. Equally, the end product of Entrepreneurial and Lifelong Education is the production of entrepreneurs to drive the private sector, thereby increasing the number of individuals participating in economic activities of the nation and reduction of government participation and intervention.

The importance of entrepreneurs to the economy of any country include:

- 1. Provision of variety of job opportunities:** Venturing into entrepreneurship should create jobs, in business form. According to it the more enterprising people are the more the chances of investing in new businesses and the more new jobs are created.
- 2. Economic growth:** The entrepreneurs create new business that subsequently create wealth for those who directly or indirectly engage in those business. It specify that the business owners, suppliers, financiers distributors many more people benefit from the wealth created by such new companies.
- 3. Improve standard of living:** Entrepreneurs engage in production of goods and services which are sold to generate income for the people and government. This brings about improved living standard of the consumers and producers alike.
- 4. Investment opportunities:** The new businesses established may open investment opportunities when they succeed. Most of these companies can enlist in stock exchange market for people to invest by way of share purchasing.
- 5. Profit:** Shareholders in successful businesses receive dividend at intervals.
- 6. Tax base of a government:** The more entrepreneurs set up businesses, the more the government earn revenue from tax payment. The workers and entrepreneurs pay wages and taxes. Sometimes additional tax is paid on goods and services, beside those paid by the business owners and the employees.
- 7. Technological development:** In a bid to maximize profit, business owners (entrepreneurs) get involved in competition. By so doing, new technology can be evolved.

History and Scope of Entrepreneurial and Lifelong Education in Nigeria

We must take note of two issues at this point. One, entrepreneurial and lifelong education connotes skills acquisition for self reliance and employment. Two, Nigeria is an example of a developing country where entrepreneurs are not the major drivers of the economy. Infact, Nigeria, which epitomizes developing countries, is an instance of countries that are just discovering the importance of entrepreneurship in economic advancement. Therefore, reference to Nigeria is synonymous with referring to developing countries.

Entrepreneurship is as old as Nigeria. Before the advent of western education, entrepreneurship existed. Youths (boys) were trained during traditional or indigenous

education to emulated their fathers' skills. For instance, those whose fathers were sculptors automatically became sculptors. Many young men took to their fathers' occupation. Accomplished traders employed others and many were indeed self-reliant and employed without seeking white-collar jobs (Dienye, 2003). The major drivers of the economy between pre-colonial and late colonial era were entrepreneurs who learnt their fathers /guardians' skills or traded on agricultural products.

But the situation changed with the introduction of western education. Young male Africans became interpreters to the colonial administration. Some others became teachers and court workers and messengers. Much later, specifically during the oil-boom, Nigerian girls and boys went to school to become oil workers or administrators in oil companies and their subsidiaries. The situation turned to unemployment when many graduates could not be employed by the government and the few parastatals that existed.

In order to curb the ever increasing number of unemployed youths, Nigerian Government, through Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC), instituted Entrepreneurship Education. Tertiary institutions in Nigeria commenced Entrepreneurship Education in 2007/2008 academic session (Amuchi 2012).

Basically, this formed the origin of Entrepreneurial Education in Nigeria. Many authorities in Entrepreneurship Education opined that the programme is not properly handled to inspire its graduates into taking to self-employment. Anyanwu (2000) particularly that Entrepreneurship Education should in addition, perform other roles such as offering tertiary institutions graduates adequate training in risk management to make risk bearing feasible. Denga and Denga (2008) observed that the present Entrepreneurship Education does not generate many skills to be selected from. Igwe (2009) suggested that the schools should also include intrapreneurship education. To enable the students have variety of options choose from. The above observations point to the uniqueness of the conference. Its theme and sub-theme provide a wide-range of areas in which entrepreneurial ventures could contain. It must be mentioned that present Entrepreneurship Education is limited in content and practice. This brings us to the issue of challenges in present day Entrepreneurship Education.

Inhibition of Entrepreneurial and Lifelong Education in a Developing Country like Nigeria

Entrepreneurial Education is done as General Studies (GST) without enough practicals. Infact, it is more or less handled with non-challant attitude. Students do it without enough commitment, they do the course just to pass examination. Osuala (2004) and Brown (2012) agree that the present Entrepreneurship Education lacks in content and practice, hence it does not produce Entrepreneurs as expected, because it lacks:

- ❖ Adequate facilities and equipment that enhance teaching and learning.
- ❖ Enough skills to be chosen from

- ❖ Enough Entrepreneurial teachers
- ❖ It suffers poor social attitude to technical and vocational education development.
- ❖ It lacks capital
- ❖ Lacks effective policy on Entrepreneurship.

Mustapha, Umaru and Pelemo (2017) added that Entrepreneurship Education in many developing countries is poorly planned and executed to produce results. It can be countries, particularly Nigeria had still birth.

The Way Forward

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Since developing countries have recognized the crucial place of Entrepreneurial ventures in revamping their economies; we ought to commit much into planning and implementing Entrepreneurship and Lifelong Education to make it productive. There are comparative studies in all fields of human endeavours. Therefore entrepreneurial and Lifelong Education should not be left out. A more tenable way to productive Entrepreneurship Education in developing countries is to have a Comparative Entrepreneurial Education in the curriculum. This will give an idea of what is done in other climes.

Sull (2017) in an article titled: “a strategy to meet the challenges of entrepreneurship students of Entrepreneurship Education should be taught the following:

- 1. Screening opportunities:** The writer pointed out that no businesses is risk-free, emphasizing that the fear of risks scare prospective young entrepreneur from going into business. According to him, a good orientation on how to surmount risks can encourage young entrepreneurs.
- 2. Match money and opportunity:** Another obstacle that discourage intending entrepreneurs is money and capital in general. The fear of how to raise take off fund business when they graduate. To surmount this obstacle, Entrepreneurship Education should include, not only how to source fund but also provision of fund.
- 3. Stage experiments:** The training of entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship Education should include practical workshops. The source suggested that there should be experiment production before going in “the full-blown” production. This would give the young entrepreneur what the whole exercise would look like.
- 4. Write good contracts:** According to Sull (2017) writing good contracts would involve “drawing the value chain of all the activities and resources needed to pursue the opportunity” partners into the business.
- 5. Assemble a team:** He said the strength of team to be assembled depends on the rate of production the entrepreneur is to indulge in. In other words, an assemblage of work force.

Igwe (2009) suggested that durable and productive Entrepreneurship Education should look beyond entrepreneurial ventures. Rather, it should include intrapreneurship, where young entrepreneurs should be allowed to practice Entrepreneurship education inside existing businesses. They would be engaged in commission or on part-time basis to invent ideas that would improve and broaden the production capacities of existing businesses. The more such businesses expand the more jobs will be created for the teeming population of the unemployed.

Again, this is one area in which the conference is unique because it proposes to explore and unveil entrepreneurial chances in every discipline. I wish you fruitful plenary sessions.

Thank you.

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