

ENTREPRENEURIAL ISSUES FOR A FUNCTIONAL BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME TOWARDS THE ATTAINMENT OF NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS

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Abstract

There have been conscious efforts in recent times at modifying and re-modifying our educational policies and programmes to suit the realities of our time. An aspect of this modification is the inclusion of entrepreneurship in our educational programmes. The inclusion has not satisfactorily addressed our recurrent national problems as the unemployment and crime rates are still so high. This paper looked at the concept of entrepreneurship and functional business education programme. It equally discussed entrepreneurial aspect of business education and entrepreneurial issues in our national educational goals. Among other things, it recommends that all aspects of business education programmes that have to do with entrepreneurship have to be identified and stressed for functionality and achievement of national educational goals.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a relatively recent issue in discussing educational programmes and curricula. In the opinion of Osuala (2005), it is an emerging but important field of study in our national educational policy. However, entrepreneurship is not a new concept in French economy and some developed countries of the world. The term “entrepreneurship” originated in France in 17th century according to Olagunji (2004). At that time, it was associated with someone who undertakes a risk. The new concept of entrepreneur goes beyond someone who undertakes a risk to a level of being able to start or organize a business enterprise.

Schumpeter (1943) in an earlier literature about entrepreneurship defined it as the creative process of capitalism. His focus in this definition is on how entrepreneurship can revolutionize the productive processes of an enterprise. More current literature places emphasis on ability to successfully start a new business enterprise or promote an existing one. For instance, Nwaokolo (1999) sees entrepreneurship as a way of making a living through working for oneself.

Being entrepreneurial is a derivative of entrepreneurship which describes the motivating spirit in one who is innovative. It describes someone who has creative urges towards a new or existing enterprise. The features of a person who is entrepreneurial according to Osuala (2005) are; self confidence, ability to take risk, leadership qualities, originality and hard work.

Business Education as a discipline is concerned with production of a class of people who can be both mentally and physically useful to the society. Kashim (2000) in reference to a policy document on Business and Economic, Education (1975) defined Business Education as a broad based education programme that entails education for general business organization and education for classroom instructions on practical skill and theoretical acquisition of knowledge. This type of education cannot be said to be functional when in the opinion of Adewale (2000), some of her products are roaming around the streets un-employed. There must be a more functional and entrepreneurial approach to the study of Business Education.

Concept of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship as a term is attracting a lot of attentions among researchers in recent time, because of its relevance in today's society. Okenwa (2005) defined entrepreneurship as an act of undertaking business risk with ultimate objective of maximizing profit. This definition shows that the undertaking of risk in carrying out business is for the genuine purpose of maximizing profit.

In his own approach, Agbongiasede (2008) quoting Iheonunekwu (2003) maintained that entrepreneurship is an effort at evaluating business opportunities, gathering the necessary resources and initiating appropriate actions. It is similar to the notion of Olagunji (2004) who saw entrepreneurship as creative tendencies in starting and carrying on business. Entrepreneurship as a concept can be perceived from different angles: as an ability to start a business; as leadership qualities of carrying on business; as an ability to organize a business or as simply being innovative. Hornby (2000) defined entrepreneurship as the ability to start or organize a commercial enterprise, especially one involving a financial risk.

The term "entrepreneurial" is derived from entrepreneurship and can be seen as attributes of entrepreneurship. Some of the attributes of entrepreneurship are: self-confidence, ability to take risk, positive leadership qualities, originality and hard work (Osuala, 2005). These qualities are necessary in starting and sustaining a business enterprise. Lack of those qualities will of course, jeopardize the chances of succeeding in a business undertaking, no matter the huge amount of money invested in the business.

Functional Business Education Programme

Business Education, which can as well be put as education for business (Aleke, 2008) is concerned with the teaching of skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary for a successful business career. It is designed to develop special traits in marketable business skills. It is the same way Olusola (2001) perceive Business Education.

In discussing functional business education programme, one may like to take it off from the position of Anyaduba (1986). He made a clear and analytic conceptualization of Business Education. In his opinion, 'education for business' is all forms of learning that relate to business that are systematically undertaken with career focus on one or other cognate fields. Education about business is the type offered to all students in the school system including secondary schools without career aspirations. It must have been from this level that Nwosu (1999) derived his definition of Business Education as "education for and about business". The major issues to be addressed in line with the above postulations are: How can the products of Business Education be more useful to themselves and the society? How can our economy be moved through Business Education as a discipline? How can Business Education help in addressing the problems of un-employment and massive rural-urban drift of youths? Until these questions are satisfactorily addressed through Business Education as a discipline, Business Education cannot be said to be functional.

So, functional Business Education programme involves proper identification of the attributes of Business Education and the areas the skill and knowledge of business are needed. Business Education ought to play vital roles in vocationally and professionally preparing citizens for future life. In identifying the attributes of Business Education, care should be exercised in doing so to be in tune with the two distinctions of business education as clearly spelt out by Anyaduba (1986) and Nwosu (1999). These are education for business and education about business.

When it is education for business, career prospects will be borne in mind; example of these are typing skills, secretarial skills, computer literacy skills, office management skills, accounting

skills. The trainees or students have to be prepared with the stress of emphasis on what they will likely do in a world of work. When it is education about business, emphasis may not be placed on practical skills, but on theoretical knowledge about business. This is why Olusola (2001) stressed that Business Education if properly organized has the potential to reverse the increasing un-employment trend and stop massive rural-urban drift of our young citizens.

Entrepreneurial Aspect of Business Education Programme

An entrepreneur is a risk taker in issues about business enterprise. He is someone who initiates, encourages or promotes others in using the available resources to carry on business. Olagunji (2004) affirms that an entrepreneur organizes both human and material inputs of an organization to achieve a desired objective. Iheonunekwu (2003) maintained that the concept of entrepreneurship has gone beyond being the owner of one-man business to someone who will be able to create opportunities in any type of business, including joint stock company. In other words, earlier literature on entrepreneur focuses on one man business, but in the current dispensation, one looks at the attribute or strategies of an entrepreneur rather than the nature or size of business. An entrepreneur creates opportunity for seeking and utilizing information. He is persistent in organizing and taking risks according to Olagunji (2004).

Being entrepreneurial is simply exposing these attributes inherent in an entrepreneur. For instance, an entrepreneur should be creative and be prepared to take risks for the success of the business. He always bears in mind that his chances of success in any venture is equivalent to his chances of failure.

In the opinion of Adewale (2000) most aspects of Business Education are entrepreneurial in nature. However, there are areas that are purely knowledge-oriented. In education for business, the career prospects may be for civil service jobs or for organizing business enterprise. The concern here is not for civil service jobs, but for planning, starting or organizing a business. So, the aspects of business that are entrepreneurial in nature are business skills, business finance, business planning, rules and regulations of starting business, business laws, registration of businesses, business incorporation, partnership laws, sources of finance, capitalization e.t.c. The attributes of an entrepreneur is needed in each of these areas. It is different from discussing national budget, government finance, civil service rules, office administration or per capital income.

Entrepreneurial Issues and Attainment of National Educational Goals

Nigeria educational goals are part of the broad spectrum of national goals geared towards the achievement of the vision 2020. The national educational goals are identified conscious efforts to include all parts of our national life into the education of the citizens (Nwaokolo, 1999). As a result; social, political, economic, cultural, religious and even socio-psychological realities of our national life are built into our educational contents and curricula. It is in this direction that national orientation, political education and citizenship education are reflected in some of our schools curricula.

Adewale (2000) deriving his facts from the content of the National Policy on Education (2004) and other documents that deal with the achievement of national goals, summarized national educational goals as;

- The inclusion of a functional and permanent literacy and numeracy in our curriculum.
- The laying of sound basic scientific and reflective thinking.
- Provision of technical knowledge and vocational skills.
- Development of sound attitudes, and character/moral training.

- Promotion of the spirit of self-reliance.
- Diversifying the curriculum to embrace wide range of opportunities and talents.
- Providing highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers at all levels.

Entrepreneurship is all about starting a new business, being innovative or promoting an existing business. Being entrepreneurial is the attributes of an entrepreneur in achieving the above objectives, in line with the postulation of Osuala (2005). Therefore, the above national objectives will not be realized if entrepreneurship is not promoted. For instance, promotion of the spirit of self-reliance will be a mere rhetoric if there is no model for spirit of hardwork and creativity. This is because hardwork and creativity are the core pre-requisites of self-reliance. Also, technical and vocational knowledge without suitable entrepreneurial spirit will lead to mere regurgitative or rote learning.

It is therefore very important that the attributes of entrepreneurship be inculcated to the learners at each of our education level. When it is done this way, the products of any level of education can be reflective in thinking and take risks in embarking on new projects.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship is a relatively recent but important area of our educational programmes. Entrepreneurship is ability to start, organize or successfully manage a business with creative ideas. Functional Business Educational programme involves different aspects of Business Education that can lead to creativity and adaptation in the world of work. For business education to be functional, its vocational attributes needs to be stressed. Education that is for mere orientation or theoretical knowledge is not desirable, if the efforts to reduce un-employment rate should be promoted. Entrepreneurial skills are therefore necessary in bridging the gaps between education for a living and education for certification created by rote leaning in our educational system, for the achievement of our national goals.

Recommendations

Based on the above discourse, the following recommendations are made:

1. More inclusions of entrepreneurial issues should be made in the schools curricula.
2. Entrepreneurship should be taught as a subject, right from primary school.
3. All aspects of Business Education programmes that have to do with entrepreneurship have to be identified and stressed.
4. Entrepreneurship should be emphasized in our national goals.
5. Entrepreneurship should be a part of the orientation given to National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members and students on Industrial Training.

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