

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN NIGERIA UNIVERSITIES: PROGRAMMES AND GOALS FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This paper examined the programmes and goals of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities for sustaining national development. It emphasized that implementation of entrepreneurship education in universities in Nigeria can increase employment, productivity and create wealth. This document posited that entrepreneurship education programmes in universities in Nigeria is directed towards equipping students with knowledge and skills required for employment generation. The paper examined the programmes and goals of entrepreneurship education programmes being implemented in Nigerian universities. It is believed that realisation of the goals of entrepreneurship education will address the issues of graduate unemployment, crimes, poverty and create wealth, develop self reliance as well as stimulate economic activities leading to sustainable national development in Nigeria. It was suggested that lecturers involved in entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities should be trained to offer encompassing qualitative training to students.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education; Entrepreneurial skills; Programmes; Goals; Sustainable National Development.

Entrepreneurship education has been adopted by several nations as means to further sustain the development of their countries and improve their Gross Domestic Product. Uwazie and Igwemma in Nwaiwu, Onuoha and Ajileye (2014) stated that in 1993 over 400 colleges and universities in the United States of America (USA) offered courses in entrepreneurship education. Some universities in Canada offer Entrepreneurship as course of study at Undergraduate Degree and Master Degree level. Entrepreneurship was introduced into the curricula of universities among other tertiary institutions in Nigeria following the assertive direction of the National Universities commission (NUC) to all universities to include Entrepreneurship as course of study. The objective was to equip graduates from universities with skills to produce goods and services as well as inculcate entrepreneurial qualities. It was intended that at graduation the individuals will become job creators and not job seekers.

Entrepreneurship is defined as the process by which individuals pursue opportunities without regards to resources they currently control (Onwugbuta, 2017). Entrepreneurship was viewed by Okokokwo, Monanu, Udeh, Basse-Ewah and Okoli (2015) as a process through which individuals exploit available economic opportunities with the associated risks or inadequate resources under their control. The entrepreneur is motivated by the ability to observe a business opportunity and coordinates the required resources with determination and focus to succeed notwithstanding the attendant risks.

Nigeria is presently burdened with graduate unemployment, poverty and crimes. Nwachukwu (2012) reported that Economic Survey in 2011 put unemployment rate in Nigeria at 23.9 percent.

Graduate unemployment is high because graduates prefer well paid jobs. Nigerian university educational system did not place emphasis on acquisition of vocations skills prior to introduction of entrepreneurship education. Adebisi and Oni (2012) noted that lack of entrepreneurial skills is a major contributing factor to unemployment of graduates in Nigeria. Onuma (2016) reported that beneficiaries of entrepreneurship education having acquired entrepreneurial skills create jobs upon graduation. Dogan (2015) argued that the presence of successful entrepreneurs and the increase of number of entrepreneurs in a society is dependent on the potential entrepreneurs receiving entrepreneurship education and having a desire for entrepreneurship.

Self employment generates income for the entrepreneur as well as the employees. Nwosu and Ohia (2009) asserted that for entrepreneurship education to make positive contribution in generating employment, it should be practical oriented and industrial attachment of undergraduates of all programmes in relevant establishment is very pertinent. In addition to employment of human resources other resources idle capital and land become productive. Entrepreneurship education is required to include behavioural simulations and areas like negotiation, leadership, creative thought, technological innovation and development of new products, discovery and exploration of new business opportunities and long term business planning need to be focused on (Kaalyoncuoglu, Aydintan & Goksel, 2017).

Basically, entrepreneurship education is carried out in universities to provide entrepreneurial skills for individuals to be self reliant by creating jobs for themselves and others after graduation. Ezeugbor and Nwachukwu (2009) were of the view that the accelerated level of crime in the society was attributable to lack of employment and skills for self reliance. Creation of employment opportunities by more graduates with creative strategies, innovative tactics and a perception of market trends increases productivity as well as consumption of goods and services; enhances the level income per capita and stimulate economic activities. Increase in productivity is also achieved through improved technology and management expertise of products of entrepreneurship education.

Entrepreneurship education creates wealth through individuals who engage in economic activities and generate revenue in form of taxes for nations. Wealth creation through entrepreneurship activities has become imperative in the economic transformation of developing economies. Abubakar & Adeyeye, (2018) disclosed that entrepreneurship has contributed in the areas of increase in personal income, increase in general consumption level, mobilization of domestic savings and reduction in the level of crime in the society.

Tamuno and Ogiji (1999) viewed entrepreneurship education as a type of education which has the ability to impact on the growth and development of an enterprise through technical and vocational training. Entrepreneurship education is regulated to provide graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities to become self employed and serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development. Entrepreneurial education also provides university graduates with adequate training in risk management. The administration of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities is presently faced with challenges of inadequate entrepreneurship lecturers, curriculum content, lack of workshop, lack of equipped laboratories and inadequate funding (Ebong & Nwakudu, 2017). Agbonlahor (2016) identified challenges faced by entrepreneurship education in Nigeria as low capacity of entrepreneurship lecturers, absence of curricular capacity to support the training, limited infrastructural support and over emphasis on theory delivery. Many universities have embraced the entrepreneurship education, but there is no

fundamental change in the teaching and learning process of entrepreneurship education (Nwekeaku, 2013).

Teacher Education and Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is focused on the development of entrepreneurial competence, attitudes and behaviours. Teacher education is focused on the impartment of training to the teachers with the main purpose of achieving the desired academic outcomes. It is expected that teaching and learning experiences in entrepreneurship education should be active with the use of practical opportunities from the real world for the learners; therefore, there should be a substantial change in the education of the teachers involved in entrepreneurship education. Gautam and Singh (2015) asserted that teacher education for entrepreneurship education fosters creative and innovative approaches to learning which encourages experimentation and should be part of lecturers' professional development.

European Commission, Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry (2011) observed that entrepreneurship education is either absent or insufficient from most initial teacher education in most countries. In support of the view, Deveci and Seikkula- Leino (2018) asserted that for entrepreneurship education, in service lecturer are mostly unprepared in terms of theoretical and practical entrepreneurial skills. However, Nwosu and Chukwudi (2018) opined that entrepreneurship education as presently practiced in Nigerian Universities is faced with challenges of low competence of entrepreneurship education lecturers/instructors, absence of curricular capacity to support the training, poor infrastructural support, non-favourable policy environment and government support. Inadequate lecturers or the use of university lecturers with little knowledge of entrepreneurship education is one of the major challenges being faced by universities administration in implementation of the program. The majority of the entrepreneurship lecturers in the universities in Nigeria are from the faculties offering the entrepreneurship education.

European Commission, Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry (2011) identified the qualities expected of a university lecturer who has received teacher education in entrepreneurship education as follows:

- Be passionate about what he /she is doing
- Have positive attitude and be able to inspire others including his students
- Be confident in their teaching in effect providing effective leadership to students
- Be visionary and be open to new ideas
- Be open minded to how parents, organizations and other stakeholders ought to be involved in entrepreneurship education

The characteristics will prepare the lecturers to be well equipped for delivering the entrepreneurship education and use the resources available within the university and community. It is of great importance that the universities through the lectures network effectively with other stakeholders.

Curriculum development is another area that requires attention as well as funding for the entrepreneurship programmes in the universities. The inadequacy of qualified entrepreneurship trainers to develop the right contents in the curriculum poses serious challenge to the implementation of entrepreneurship education at universities. Chiemeka-Unogu (2018) affirmed that participation in training and development enables teachers to develop the knowledge and skills needed to address teachers work and students learning challenges. Universities design entrepreneurship curriculum to motivate and nurture entrepreneurship skills. In addition to generating employment on graduation, the

curriculum is geared towards equipping the entrepreneur with the strategies to start up a business and sustain it over time. Okah and Odelola (2009) believed that the appropriate entrepreneurship education curricula and training programmes which are project based and experiential learning foster entrepreneurial competencies. Akpan and Etor (2018) reiterated that government should provide adequate funds to universities to enable them establish and equip entrepreneurial development centers for practical work. Adequate and appropriate equipment and facilities required for practical demonstration are yet to be procured.

Lack of funds to carry out practical sessions could hinder the development of entrepreneurship education in the universities. Adequate funding and proper management of funds are keys to success of entrepreneurship education while inadequate funds and mismanagement of funds are the bane of it (Abraham & Nwogu, 2009).

Entrepreneurship Education Programmes in Nigerian Universities

Onuma (2016) reiterated that a review by Development Policy Research Unit (DPRU) in 2007 affirmed the need to reposition education in Nigeria especially in Universities and other tertiary sector towards entrepreneurial drive for job creation, global competitiveness of Nigerian graduates. Entrepreneurship programmes are carried out in universities in Rivers States namely Ignaius Ajuru University of Education, University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University at the undergraduate level and graduate level (Masters Level). Under the entrepreneurship programme, students are expected to acquire entrepreneurial training which focuses on knowledge and skills with practical sessions which tend to encourage students to start and succeed in a variety of settings at graduation. In universities in Rivers State of Nigeria, students are exposed to skills which include paint making, fashion designing, baking, hair dressing and barbing. Skills for which training is provided for also include crops farming, fish farming poultry farming and snail farming among others. For those intending to go into production, samples are presented during practical sessions. In the three (3) universities in Rivers State, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University, students under the entrepreneurship education are expected to prepare a feasibility report or study for a prospective business for which they intend to start up after graduation. The entrepreneurship education programmes acquaint the students with the knowledge and skills to write feasibility studies. The feasibility study helps the student to thoroughly understand all aspects of the intended business endeavour and the potential problems associated with the implementation of the entrepreneurial project. It is also aimed at providing information for marketing strategies to convince investors, banks or government agencies in investing in a particular business the student may opt for on graduation.

Entrepreneurship Education Goals for Sustainability of National Development

University education makes prime contribution to national development by making entrepreneurial skills acquisition a requirement for all Nigerian universities (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). Entrepreneurship contributes to national development in terms of creation of new technologies through research and development and provision of products and services. Entrepreneurial development promotes creativity. Many innovations have been made possible through entrepreneurship development. Smartphone was innovated by Andy Rubin in 2003 and Joseph Carl Robnett Licklider developed concepts which flourished into cloud computing. Entrepreneurship education through income generation enhances the level of per capita income which increases the

Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Entrepreneurs create employment opportunities by setting up firms to supply goods and services. These goods and services may not be available in the society or are not in sufficient quantities for which the entrepreneur evolves ways to ensure such goods and services are produced and commercialized. Entrepreneurial endeavours stimulate economic activities and increases government revenue through taxation and provision of infrastructural facilities. Furthermore, individuals generate income from their employment for consumption, investments and savings. Generally, entrepreneurship creates wealth for individuals and nations.

Entrepreneurs through establishment of organizations with entrepreneurial expertise effectively utilize the available human and natural resource resources with which Nigeria is richly endowed with. Examples include land and mineral resources. Onwugbuta (2017) asserted that entrepreneurial competence is able to assist in the effective use of local resources in the production of goods and services leading to reduction of overly dependence on imports which enhances the country's balance of payments. Consequently, increased in productivity is achieved through the management expertise of the entrepreneurs which impacts on the development of the nation.

Conclusion

Students in Nigerian universities are exposed to entrepreneurship education at undergraduate and graduate level. The essence is for them to acquire entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and attitude for job creation, self reliance, innovation, poverty eradication and wealth creation. Employment opportunities provided through entrepreneurship activities generate income for entrepreneurs and others which increase income per capital and impacts on Gross Domestic Product. The implementation is currently faced with the problems of inadequate lecturers or lecturers with little knowledge, curriculum content and poor funding. Overcoming these challenges will address the issues of graduate unemployment, poverty and crime and realisation of the goals of entrepreneurship education for sustainable national development.

Suggestions

It is suggested that for the realisation of the goals of entrepreneurship education programme in Nigerian Universities for sustainable national development, the following can be considered.

- Entrepreneurship education curriculum should be enriched to develop and motivate technological innovations in students. This will nurture creativity in students and technological advancement for the nation.
- The university authority and lecturers should partner with guest industry lecturers to carry out excursions in order to expose students as well as lecturers to successful practicing entrepreneurs to share their experiences.
- Universities assisted by the appropriate authorities and agencies should be funded for teachers education entrepreneurship. This is necessary to provide the appropriate equipment and lecturers needed for the success of the programme.
- Training and retraining of the lecturers used in facilitating entrepreneurship education is required in order to ensure that the beneficiaries of the programme acquire the required knowledge and skills for practice upon graduation. Retraining of the lecturers at regular basis is necessary for them to be abreast the progress in entrepreneurial development.

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