ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: CHALLENGES OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN NIGERIA AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By

DR. J. C. EKWURU
Faculty of Education,
Department of Curriculum Studies and Educational Technology,
Imo State University,
Owerri.

Abstract
The study was designed to address entrepreneurship education: curriculum content and challenges of entrepreneurship in Nigeria and its implication for national development. Entrepreneurship, can be described as the process of bringing in creative ideas and coupling these with management and organizational skills in order to combine people, money and resources to meet an identified need and create wealth. Entrepreneurship education can also be regarded as a social transformation plan that uses the instrumentality of education. It is aimed at changing the psyche and belief of Nigerian youths toward vocation and employment. Before this time, the faith of every School leaver is on government paid jobs and he/she is ready to stay idle for as long as the job has not been given. When it was clear that government cannot employ everybody, entrepreneurship education was introduced to challenge the School leavers into exploring other means of livelihood other than paid jobs. Nigerian government has gingered and made provisions for the imparting of entrepreneurship education from primary to higher education in Nigeria. However, there is need for the government to provide an enabling environment for entrepreneurship to thrive. This is because making the youth acquires entrepreneurship education without providing the environment for it to thrive is a waste of time and resources.

Since education is a key factor in the development of the individual and society and there is strong need for meaningful development to take care of both the individual and the society, the process of educating that individual should not be left to
planlessness, if the goals must be achieved. The demands of the society and the provision of jobs for the teeming number of graduates as their population make up 65% of the population of the country (National Policy Commission, 2006).

The term entrepreneurship education implies that entrepreneurship can be taught and this idea has been a popular topic for research. Entrepreneurship started emerging in the mid 1980s. This is because before this, unemployment and poverty were not a national concern as it is currently. In the mid 80s, the Nigeria economy collapsed while youth and graduate unemployment hit the roof. There was large-scale lay off of workers and early retirements as a result of structural adjustment policies and bad economic trends in the country. In the face of this situation, entrepreneurship, which would have salvaged the situation, was not encouraged.

**Concept of Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship, according to Sohwab (2009) is the engine fueling innovation, employment and economic growth. He went on to say that only by creating an environment where entrepreneurship can prosper and where entrepreneurs can try new ideas and empower others. Entrepreneurship without education is meaningless because it is education that helps the individuals in developing the skills that generates an entrepreneurial mindset and in preparing leaders for solving more complex interlinked and fast changing problem.

Entrepreneurship, according to Omolayo (2006), is the act of starting and arranging business deals and taking risks in order to make a profit through the education skills required. To him, entrepreneurship can be described as the process of bringing together creative ideas and coupling these with management and organizational skills in order to combine people, money and resources to meet an identified need and create wealth.

**Concept of Entrepreneurship Education**

Entrepreneurship education is a relatively new phenomenon in the education curriculum in Nigeria. Today, entrepreneurship education has become an important phenomenon in the life of Nigerians and Nigeria universities. The universities have seen the need to include the subject in their curricular. Parents, youths and the entire members of the society yearn for the same.

Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledgeable, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in primary, secondary schools through graduate university programmes (Wikipedia, 2011). Entrepreneurship education can be regarded as a social transformation plan that uses the instrumentality of education. It is aimed at changing the psyche and belief of the Nigerian youths towards vocation and employment. Entrepreneurship education is an employment strategy meant to break the jinx of poverty. It is an educational programme that challenges school leavers to put their academic proficiency into practical use.
Before this time, the hope of every school leaver has been on government paid jobs and he/she is ready to stay idle for as long as the job has not been given. When it was clear that government cannot employ everybody, entrepreneurship education was introduced to challenge the school leavers into exploring other means of livelihood other than paid jobs. The School – leavers are by this reform called upon to take control of their lives by putting their academic learning’s into practical economic activities that will prevent hunger, improve health and reduce poverty. The belief is to make school leavers enterprising individuals who can take risks of business adventure, manage results and learn from the outcomes (Wikipedia 2010).

According to Offor (2011), it is deliberate programme designed to provide career information to students to enable them relate interest, needs and abilities to occupational opportunity. Entrepreneurship education as opined by Okoro and Afunobi (2010) is an aspect of human capacity building. These views presented entrepreneurship education in terms of expected results. It is that type of education that makes the recipients entrepreneurs.

In this view, Nwagwu (2007) looked at entrepreneurship education as a route that leads people to a process of putting together some factors of production such as land, labour and capital. The purpose of this is to provide a needed product or service for public consumption. Thus, the whole concept of entrepreneurship education is quite clear; to give someone the kind of education that makes him live an independent life. One should be able to think, gather ideas, put them together and use some acquired skills to transform the resources into consumable and non-consummate products. These products become useful to him as the producer and to the public at large.

Who is An Entrepreneur?

Entrepreneur has been variously defined by different authorities, each pointing at one or more attributes of an entrepreneur. Oxford Advanced Learning Dictionary 6th Edition described an entrepreneur as a person who makes money by starting or running a business especially when it involves taking financial risks. Chukwugbo (2010) described an entrepreneur as one who effectively harnesses land, labour and capital resources and assures the risk-taking behavior that result in creation of new opportunities.

Bolton and Thompson (2000) defined entrepreneur as a person who habitually creates and innovates to build something of recognized value around perceived opportunities. Creativity and innovation are important to entrepreneurs because they are in the habit of transforming ideas into business or projects. Entrepreneurs create and deliver what others recognize as important and valuable. They also have the capacity to see prospects and bring them to realization.
Benefit of Entrepreneurship Education

Omolewa (2006) highlighted the benefits derived from entrepreneurship education as follows;

i. It gives opportunity for work-based-experiences; work experience for youths with entrepreneurial training at school, both paid and unpaid. It helps to acquire jobs at higher wages after they graduate. Also, students who participate in occupational education and entrepreneurship education in integrated settings are more likely to be competitively employed or self-reliant than students who have not participated in such activities.

ii. It gives opportunity to exercise leadership and develop interpersonal skills: By launching a small business or school-based enterprise, the youths can lead and experience different roles. In addition, they learn to communicate their ideas and influence others effectively through the development of self advocacy and conflict-resolution skills. Moreover, they learn how to become team-players, and to engage in problem solving and critical thinking-skills valued highly by employers in the competitive workplace.

iii. It gives opportunity to develop planning, financial literacy and monetary management skills; The ability to set goals and to manage time, money and other resources are important entrepreneurship skills which are useful in any workplace.

Challenges of Entrepreneurship in Nigeria and its Implication for National Development

The Nigerian government has gingered and made provisions for the imparting of entrepreneurship education from primary to higher education in Nigeria, especially with the directive by the Minister of Education in March 2011. This is because making the youths acquire entrepreneurship education without providing the environment for it to thrive is a waste of time and resources. Despite the numerous benefits of entrepreneurship education outlined above, there are a lot of challenges in Nigeria. Entrepreneurship is recognized as a growing field of interest. Several factors seem to have contributed to the increasing interest in the field. These include economic turbulences, high unemployment rates and fluctuation in international trade cycles that many industrialized countries have suffered in the last decade. Currently, there is trade and financial crises that has lead to collapse of the banking system and the stock exchange. In Nigeria, different entrepreneurship courses were offered to students as a source of future entrepreneurs. But there is lack of research regarding the effectiveness of these courses. She has been copying educational programmes and curriculum without adequate preparation and evaluation to assess compatibility to her culture and environment.
Again, according to Kolawale and Omolaye (2006), Nigeria lacks the entrepreneurship culture. Individuals have difficulties in translating their business ideas to realities and creating new business ventures because of lack of necessary information and skills needed to achieve their targets. In the past, the university curriculum was geared towards making graduates suitable only for white-collar jobs. This is why millions of our youths and a lot of university graduates roam about the streets of the major cities and towns in search of white collar jobs. It is necessary and possible to position Nigeria Universities to stimulate economic growth through a deliberate agenda of production of entrepreneurial graduates.

Bankole (2006), in his personal research identified a five – pronged factor called “The MIFIT factor” as the real constraint and restraint that retards entrepreneurship in Nigeria. In the acronym:

i. **M** stands for “Markets”: Majority of Nigerians do not have access to markets. They have to understand the requirements of the market, especially overseas markets where standards, packaging and hygienic processing plays a very important role to the requirements for exports.

ii. **I** stand for **Infrastructure**: This is basically true in all developing countries, but more so in Nigeria where 30% of our not being competitive in the world market is based on infrastructure especially power, public supply of portable water and transport. If the bottleneck of power is removed, Nigeria will at least, gain 30% competitiveness in production.

iii. **F** stands for **Finance**: This is another constraint. Capital is a big constraint in Nigeria. All interventions initiated by government and the Banker’s committee however will eventually solve this challenge and improve the rate of availability of funds for business.

iv. **I T** stand for **Information Technology**: This has gradually improved with the adoption of e-commerce. This has made Nigeria hub for master card in Africa.

v. **T** stands for **Telecommunication**: Reforms in telecommunication has increased the tele-density of mobile telephone. It is however expensive. The only way to provide a cheaper telecommunication services is to provide landlines. Government, the regulatory authority and the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) have to work towards entrenching landlines and it usage.

**Conclusion**

It is evident that Nigeria is lagging behind in preparing her work force for the challenge of the rapidly changing global economy and this has adversely affected the drive to eradicate poverty and reduce graduate unemployment. It is concluded that improved and sustainable economic development depends on a strong entrepreneurship...
education. This will encourage the creation of entrepreneurial culture in Nigeria. It is against this back-ground that following recommendation for the effective entrepreneurship education in Nigeria for the achievement of the twenty (20) best economies in the world by the year 2015 are made.

**Recommendation**

a) Realizing that development in other sector of the economy is determined by the level of development in education sector, the government should first and foremost fund education well by increasing budgetary allocation and monitoring the use for the provision of facilities. It is not possible to achieve a social transformation without huge financial expenditure.

b) There is no good alternative to electricity. The presence of electricity improves teaching and learning. Government should provide steady power supply to achieve uninterrupted school activities.

c) Incentives should be provided in the form of studying in tertiary institutions.

d) Government should through relevant parastatal create more awareness to the students regarding the objectives of entrepreneurship education to enable the students realize the dual purpose of the programme which are:
   i. Acquisition of knowledge
   ii. Putting the skill into meaningful economic use.

e). There is need to employ more technical teachers to prevent colleges from closing down for want of technical teachers.

f). Curriculum experts should ensure that adequately loaded entrepreneurial curriculum is made available for effective implementation on entrepreneurial education programme by competent teachers and other resource persons by using adequate instructional materials, regular evaluation measures and suitable instructional methods/strategies among others.

g). People who are interested in entrepreneurial ventures should endeavour to acquire enough experience before going into it. This will help them to excel successfully.

h). Government and other education stakeholders should make sure that educational programmes at all levels made relevant to provide the youths and graduates needed entrepreneurial skills that will lead to the attainment of self reliant economy.

i). It is also recommended that the government should give adequate attention to entrepreneurial development in the country through the provision of good economic environment. This is to encourage individual participation in business and consequently, improve economic growth.

j). Teachers programme courses should be introduced to empower the teachers on teaching of entrepreneurial courses.
References


